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The Saints

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

BY

MGR. PIERRE BATIFFOL

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH

BY

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SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTH OF SAINT GREGORY

THE year A.D. 476—a date which has usually been regarded as portentous, because that year beheld the extinction of the line of the Western emperors—made in reality only a slight commotion in the history of Italy. The last emperors of the Occident had been imperial shadows. Thenceforth the "Republic" possessed no more territory either in Africa, which had become Vandal; or in Spain, which had become Visigoth or Suevian; or in Gaul, which had passed into the hands of the Visigoths, Burgundians, and Franks. In Italy alone the Republic still existed. The army that defended it, and of which Odoacer was the chief, was an army of barbarians; but Odoacer, when he installed himself at Ravenna in the palace of the vanished emperors, did not assume the imperial insignia. Reserving to himself the title of king, he wished to be only a sort of legal representative of the emperor of Constantinople, and

even in Odoacer's time, statues were raised at Rome to the Byzantine emperor Zeno (474–491), a proof that Rome was still dependent on the latter's sovereignty.[1]

The difficulty of this state of affairs was to induce Constantinople to accept it. Theodoric had offered to go with his Ostrogoths to reconquer Italy for the Empire, and Zeno welcomed his advances. Accordingly, Theodoric entered Italy in 488, and two years later was its master, Rome included. Finally in 493 he captured Ravenna, where he took the place of Odoacer. "The system begun by Odoacer was maintained and perfected by this chief of the Ostrogoths. Assuming the simple title of king, he commanded all the resident barbarians and exercised the functions of a vice-emperor over the population of Rome."[2] In that city the Senate still existed and received, as occasion arose, the commands (*jussiones*) of the king (*basileus*). We have a letter, written in 516, from the Senate of Rome to the emperor Anastasius at Constantinople, thanking him for his "*sacræ jussionis oracula*," the execution of which "our lord, and very invincible king, Theodoric your son, having prescribed obedience to your orders," has commanded.[3]

When Theodoric died in 526, it was the Ostrogoths who showed themselves incapable of maintaining this equilibrium. But just about that time, Justinian (527–565) formed the plan of reconquering the Occident. How it succeeded is

well known. In 533–534, Vandal Africa was regained by Belisarius; the turn of Ostrogoth Italy came next. That conquest was, however, difficult, and twenty years of hard warfare were necessary to accomplish it (535–554); but this time Italy, when reconquered, was made subject directly to the emperor of Constantinople. Thereafter, for the administration of Italy there was no longer a barbarian king, but an imperial and military functionary, known as the Exarch, who resided in Ravenna.

Italy, as an integral part of the Byzantine Empire, endured two centuries, and the exarchate of Ravenna actually disappeared only when Pepin gave it to Pope Stephen II, in 754, after having himself taken it from the Lombards. But Byzantine Italy had existed during those two centuries only as a dismembered State.

Already in 568 the Lombards had penetrated into Italy, and four years were sufficient for them to conquer, city by city, the whole northern part of the peninsula from the Alps to the Apennines. A little later, they were at Spoleto and Brindisi. Pavia, taken in 572, was to become their capital. But, since they had no navy, Ravenna, Genoa, Rome, and Naples escaped them. Out of these fragments there were formed groups of imperial territories, each administered by a duke (*dux*) or a general (*magister militum*); these groups consisted of the exarchate, which, strictly speaking, was the region of Ravenna; another group was the

Pentapolis (territory of five cities) with Rimini for its capital; then Istria, Venezia, Liguria, Naples, and finally Rome, while Sicily and Dalmatia attached themselves directly to Constantinople. The rest of Italy was seized by the Lombards, who meted out to all who resisted them a reign of terror and desultory warfare.[4]

In the work written by Saint Gregory there is perceptible an intense realization of the desolation of Rome and Italy, and a perpetual lamentation over the spectacle they presented of public calamities so excessive that they seemed to him indubitable signs of the coming end of the world. In 593 he writes: "We see nothing but mourning everywhere, we hear nothing but wailing on all sides. Cities are destroyed, fortifications demolished, countries depopulated, the earth reduced to a wilderness. Not a man in the fields, scarcely an inhabitant left in the cities, and meanwhile not a day on which the little that remains of the human race is not smitten with disaster. . . . Some are carried off into captivity, others beheaded or massacred."

So much for Italy in general; now for Rome:

"We see what has become of her, who once appeared the mistress of the world. She is broken by all that she has suffered from immense and manifold misfortunes—the desolation of her inhabitants and the threats of her enemies. Ruins

upon ruins everywhere! . . . Where is the Senate? Where are the people? . . . All the pageantry of secular dignities is annihilated. . . . And we, the few of us who are left, are menaced every day by the sword and innumerable trials. . . . We have no longer a Senate, no longer a people; or, for those who still exist, sorrows and groanings multiplied daily. Deserted Rome is in flames; her buildings also. . . . We see them in the work of self-destruction" (*Homil. in Ezech.*, II, vii, 22).

Yet even in Saint Gregory's time, Rome still had her *gloriosissimus præfectus urbis;* and beside this prefect of the city appeared also the *magister militum,* who had command of the stronghold of Rome and who—since the civil authority rested in the hands of the prefect within the city walls—administered the government or *ducatus* of all the Byzantine region around Rome, the *partes romanæ.*[5]

The emperor was represented by the exarch of Ravenna, whose authority extended over all Byzantine Italy and was a permanent investiture of imperial sovereignty, "*ministerium imperialis fastigii,*" as the *Liber diurnus* will say.[6] Rome remained, therefore, potentially at least, an imperial residence and still maintained an imperial palace, to judge from the letter of Saint Gregory begging that their regular rations of food supplies should be served to the functionaries who occupied it, "*diversa officia palatii urbis Romæ.*"[7] Hence

the palace still existed, and served as the symbol of imperial dominion. Later, when Phocas has been made emperor, he will send to Rome his portrait and that of his wife the empress Leontia ; and the two icons will be received at the Lateran and in the *Basilica Julia*, in the presence of the clergy and the Senate (for there will then still be a Senate), and the portraits will be acclaimed and the Pope will order that they shall be placed in the oratory of Saint Cesarius, *intra palatium*, that is, actually, in the imperial palace of Rome.[8]

Sometimes the Exarch of Ravenna made his appearance in Rome. We shall see him, for example, in 599, preparing to come thither on June 29, to celebrate the birthday (*dies natalitius*) of Saint Peter, prince of the apostles (J. 1680). In this we have an indication of the devotion which was then paid to Saint Peter ; and it is noteworthy that it was paid precisely to the apostle Peter, the prince of the apostles. It would seem that Saint Paul was temporarily forgotten. This devotion gives to Rome a title which has outlived all the proud names which she acquired by her domination of the world, and which had once made of her "*urbs urbium et totius mundi caput ingens*," as Gregory of Tours has said (*History of France*, V, prol.).

The apostle's body then reposed in the confessional of his basilica, and pilgrims came thither, as to a sanctuary which was unique in the world.[9]

Under Pope Vigilius (537–555), Belisarius, after his victories in Africa, presented to the Holy Father a cross of gold decorated with gems and weighing a hundred pounds, and with these were presented two great chandeliers of gilded silver, to be placed for ever before the body of the blessed apostle Peter. During the pontificate of Pope Hormisdas (514–523) magnificent gifts from the emperor Justin are mentioned, and under Pope John II (533–535) similar donations were made by the emperor Justinian. Theodoric also, though an Arian, figures among the donors of the time of Hormisdas, and also Clodomir, king of the Franks.[10]

After the fifth century, this same devotion gave rise to what is called the Patrimony of Saint Peter, an immense amount of landed property, the principal blocks of which were found in Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Dalmatia, Africa, and Provence, and the revenue from which made of the Church of Rome a financial power.[11]

But the Church of Rome had something still better. The great apostle and the See of Rome are identical. To address oneself to the bishop of Rome is called having recourse to the apostle Peter. The documents testifying to the authority of the bishop of Rome are worded: "*ex auctoritate beati Petri apostolorum principis.*"

In the Church of Rome one is sure to find the solid foundation of the faith of Peter. The prince

of the apostles is perpetuated in his successor. In 526, the coming of Pope John to Constantinople was the occasion of demonstrations which revealed the unique prestige of the See of Rome even in the Orient. For the first time, a Pope was to be seen in Constantinople, and the inhabitants of the city came to meet him to the number of fifteen thousand, with candles and crosses, in order to receive with splendid pomp the representative of the apostle Peter. On that occasion, the emperor Justin prostrated himself before him and declared that he was filled with joy to have been deemed worthy to behold in his kingdom the Vicar of Saint Peter. So testifies the *Liber pontificalis*.

This does not mean, however, as we shall see, that the ecclesiastical policy of Justinian did not seriously humiliate the Popes of his time—for example, a Vigilius or a Pelagius—and did not prepare for their successors conditions of subjection which Saint Leo would not acknowledge. The apostolic See, on this side, had a score difficult to settle. But in the desolate condition of Rome and Italy; in the distress of an empire, at once so diminished, impoverished and menaced upon all its frontiers; and in a Europe, where everything was given over to the barbarians, and where (to quote the words of Gregory),[12] it seemed that the pagans were becoming again the masters, Providence was preparing the entry on the scene of a Pope, Roman by race and spirit, who was not to strive for the dominion of the world, but whose

ambition was to be simply the servant of God's servants; yet whose prestige was destined to be exceptional and whose unusually sympathetic memory was to remain in history as a benediction.

* * * * *

When Saint Gregory said that the Roman Senate no longer existed, he was thinking of the great Roman families that had become extinct there, and also of others who had left Rome for Constantinople, where they sought security and favour. But the whole of ancient Rome had not emigrated, and we have a proof of this fact in the very family of Gregory. He was by birth a descendant "*de senatoribus primis*," as we are informed by his contemporary, Gregory of Tours (*History of France*, X, 1) who was in a position to know, for he had his deacon, Agiulfus, in Rome at the time of the election of Saint Gregory to the Papacy.

The father of Saint Gregory was called Gordianus and his mother Silvia. My father, relates Saint Gregory, had three sisters, Tarsilla, Gordiana, and Æmiliana, all of whom together vowed their virginity to God. Of the three Gordiana alone failed to persevere in her vocation and married. Tarsilla died a holy death, which Saint Gregory took pleasure in recounting. She had been warned in a dream that her days were numbered, for the Pope Felix had appeared and said to her: "Come,

for I will receive you into this abode of light." She died soon after; and Gregory himself wrote: "*Per visionem atavus meus Felix, hujus Romanæ Ecclesiæ antistes apparuit.*" This Pope Felix, great-great-grandfather of Saint Gregory, can be only Felix III, formerly the priest Felix who, it is known, had been commissioned by Pope Saint Leo to repair the basilica of Saint Paul. He had formerly been married, and we have the epitaphs of his wife, Petronia (died 472), of his daughter Paula (died 484), of his son Gordianus (died 485), and of his daughter Æmiliana (died 489). The names Gordianus and Æmiliana were perpetuated in the family of Felix III.[13]

Pope Agapitus (535–536) belonged to this family. He was the son of a Gordianus, titular priest of Saints John and Paul,[14] and had been in his childhood attached to the clergy of that title. Agapitus, who was a man of letters, had set up in his dwelling a library the dedicatory inscription of which still exists. It is as follows: "A venerable cohort of saints holds court here in a long row, teaching the mystical words of the divine law. Agapitus, sitting in their midst, as befits a bishop, has constructed with artistic skill this beautiful receptacle for books. An equal grace is found in all these authors, and a holy labour is common to them all: the words have not the same sound, but there is only one faith."

We will quote the Latin text of these verses, for though the poetry is rather ordinary, it neverthe-

less reveals the love for books in a Pope, who was a friend of Cassiodorus :

Sanctorum veneranda cohors sedit ordine (lungo)
Divinæ legis mystica dicta docens.
Hos inter residens Agapitus jure sacerdos
Codicibus pulchrum condidit arte locum
Gratia par cunctis sanctus labor omnibus unus.
Dissona verba quidem sed tamen una fides.

In the eighth century, this inscription was still seen in its original place. The pilgrim of the *Sylloge einsidlensis* copied it in the library of the monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, a library which he calls " the library of Saint Gregory."[15]

It was really the library of Pope Agapitus, who, together with Cassiodorus, had formed the plan of organizing at Rome, and no doubt adjoining his own library, a school in which the Holy Scriptures should be taught.[16] Agapitus had not time to carry out this plan and none of his successors took it up, not even Saint Gregory, who does not even once mention the famous Cassiodorus !

The family of Gregory belonged, as we have just seen, to the most Christian society of the Rome of the fifth and sixth century, and was a patrician family[17] which had not at all declined at the time when our saint was young. When Tarsilla died, her funeral couch was surrounded by persons eager to bring their condolences to the family, as was customary, writes Gregory,

"*for women and men of noble rank* when they die."

We do not know the date of Gregory's birth, and are thus compelled to emphasize the fact that he, who so often laments his infirmities, never speaks of his old age, whence it can be inferred that he was still young when he became Pope in 590. That he was over fifty, I gather from reading what he says (*Dialogues* II, 2) that one ought not to be made a *doctor animarum*, or director of consciences, before the age of fifty. Reckoning thus, he would have been born a little before 540, and we accept this hypothesis.

Gregory, who was perhaps the only son—for the question whether he had a brother remains problematical—adopted at first the career of a public functionary, as he himself informs us in one of his letters.

He recalls the fact that Laurentius, bishop of Milan, became reconciled with the apostolic See, by pledging himself by a declaration (*cautio*) to accept the condemnation of the "Three Chapters." This *cautio* of Laurentius was countersigned by some Roman nobles, who thus became its guarantors.

"*Cautio in qua viri nobilissimi et legitimo numero subscripserunt, inter quos ego quoque tunc urbanam præturam gerens pariter subscripsi*" (J. 1273). There is a difference of opinion about the text; in place of *præturam* one finds also *præfecturam*, which is historically more defensible.

It has been remarked indeed that there was at that time no longer a pretor at Rome, where the *Vicarius urbis* took his place. The prefect, however (*præfectus urbis*) had in his department the finances, the edileship, the provisioning of the city and the police. Nominated by the prefect of the pretorium in the name of the emperor, his duty was to go to Ravenna, at the expiration of his term of office, to render his accounts. He also presided over the assemblies of the Senate [18] and was the first civil personage of Rome. Let us admit that Gregory was prefect of Rome.

But men were not promoted to a magistracy of this rank, even if they were of noble birth, who had not received some preparation and acquired fitness for the position. We are justified in thinking also that the exercise of authority must have given to Gregory an experience that he was not to lose, but was, on the contrary, to retain from his service in the imperial administration a profound appreciation of the order and sequence of affairs necessary in every responsible government. With him Law is supreme. "What you have allowed to be done," he will one day say to the Exarch of Africa, "is contrary to the discipline of the Republic" (J. 1129). "If," he writes again, "in secular offices, order and regular discipline are observed," who can endure confusion, negligence, and errors in ecclesiastical affairs?—"*Si sæcularibus officiis ordo et tradita a majoribus disciplina servatur. . . .*" "Here is a bishop," it

might be said, " who remembers that he was once a prefect, and who does not tolerate a contempt for the law, *temeraria præsumptio*, only too common, if it is to be believed, among the employés of the Church."

We can form some idea of what Gregory could be as a magistrate from a letter, which he wrote in 598 to Leontius, an *ex-consul*, who had been sent from Constantinople to inquire about three high functionaries, the prefect of Rome, the vicar of Rome, and the pretor of Sicily at the end of their terms of office. The pretor of Sicily, the most compromised of the three, had been thrown into prison. Gregory, who was charitable enough to recommend him to Leontius for mercy, was asked to explain why he did so. He therefore wrote to the latter as follows (J. 1794): " Your eminence must remember that you have never received from me letters of recommendation for anyone, without the stipulation that you should grant your protection only within the limits of justice. . . . Who this man was, and what difficulties he has had, I have never endeavoured to know and I do not know even to-day. . . . But what I do know well is, that, if he has committed fraud at the expense of the public moneys, his goods ought to be seized, but not his person. This attack upon his liberty, not to mention the offence thus given to God, or the injury it does to your reputation, I pronounce a shadow cast upon the reign of our most pious emperor. The difference between the

barbarian kings and Roman emperors is this, that the barbarian kings are masters of slaves, *domini servorum sunt*, while the emperor of the Romans is the master of free men, *dominus liberorum*. That is why you ought, in all your acts, first to observe justice and then to respect liberty."

Gregory does not allow anyone to tell him that "public frauds cannot be detected without recourse to blows and terror." A man of the ability of Leontius cannot employ such language to excuse himself for using unjustifiable acts of violence.

"Illustrious son, act in the investigation which is intrusted to you, first, in such a way that you will not offend God, and then that you may serve scrupulously the interests of your most serene sovereign. . . . You cannot be negligent without committing sin. . . . Every time that anger takes possession of you, subdue your soul, conquer yourself. . . . Wait till you are cool enough to judge properly. In the prosecution of evil deeds, anger must follow reason, not precede it; let anger, a servant of justice, walk behind justice and not fume and fret before it."

After those words, we can well believe that he felt sympathy for Trajan.[19]

* * * * *

The success of his official career did not, however, satisfy Gregory. He says: "I deferred the

grace of conversion for a long, long time. When I was inspired with a desire emanating from heaven, I preferred to keep on wearing the vestments of the world. From that time, it was plain enough what I ought to seek for with a love for eternity; but the habits that I had acquired held me in their chains, and I could not make up my mind to change my outward life. While my mind persuaded me to serve the world merely outwardly, and in appearance only, that service managed to attach me to that world, in spite of myself, and caused me to be held back in that life of appearances by my mind, which is something more serious" (J. 1368).

The nice discriminations in these brief explanations are very different from the pathetic recitals of Saint Augustine in his *Confessions*. But Gregory's youth had known no storms; he had been "*ab adulescentia devotus Deo*," writes Gregory of Tours. The grace of conversion was for him, who was a Christian without reproach, a call to a more perfect life.

He aspired to a contemplative vocation, as his aunts Tarsilla and Æmiliana had done, "*uno ardore conversæ, uno eodemque tempore sacratæ*"—and we note his word "*conversæ*"; for conversion means here the religious profession. According to the faith which Gregory held, the present world was only a vain show; the reality was the great Beyond, the only thing worth while devoting oneself to. Nevertheless, this present world

imposed certain duties, which Gregory could not avoid. Even if honours were of little value to a soul like his, could he desert the service of the Republic in a time so difficult and when Rome was so menaced? How comprehensible his hesitations are and how greatly they honour his character!

Gregory was always absorbed in these thoughts, and on that account had not married, in order to remain more free to belong to God; but at last the day came when he resolved to give himself to him entirely. He did not, however, for that reason leave Rome, but retired to the house[20] on the *Clivus Scauri*, which he had inherited from his father. This he transformed into a monastery. His aunts Tarsilla and Æmiliana, in consecrating themselves to God, had also observed the life of the community in their own home, "*in domo propria socialem vitam ducebant*" (*Homil. in Evang.*, XXXVIII, 15).

In the course of the sixth century, monasteries for men had multiplied at Rome.[21] They were founded also almost everywhere in Italy; among them being that of Saint Juvenal, on the outskirts of Orta on the Flaminian Way, established and endowed by Belisarius, "*ubi possessiones et dona multa largitus est*"[22]; and that of Fondi, founded under the auspices of the patrician, Venantius, which numbered as many as two hundred monks (*Dialog.*, I, 1); or that of Alatri, founded by the patrician Liberius (II, 35). Monasteries for women

were also numerous. Saint Gregory (IV, 13) makes us acquainted with one of these which a noble Roman widow had created "*apud beati Petri apostoli ecclesiam.*" She was Galla, the daughter of Symmachus, the consul who was put to death with Boëthius in 525, by order of Theodoric, and was the sister of Rusticiana, wife of Boëthius.[23] Men of noble rank, like the two brothers, Speciosus and Gregorius, "*nobiles viri atque exterioribus studiis eruditi,*" abandoned the world and put themselves in the hands of Saint Benedict (IV, 8). To live in the discipline of a rule, to commune with God by contemplation and by the chanting of psalms, to practise poverty, silence, obedience, and humility—this is what the monastic life then meant, and this was what, like so many others, Gregory himself was seeking.

According to Gregory of Tours, our saint founded six monasteries in his domains in Sicily, and had given to these as much land as was necessary to assure them a subsistence. Sicily must have seemed to him an island of refuge; for it was protected from the barbarians who were then depopulating Italy; and monks could live there in peace. It was not, however, in Sicily that he established his favourite monastery, the one which he—so detached from worldly things—called "my monastery."

The *Clivus Scauri* is still there, a straight, ascending street, by which one comes to the Cœlian hill, crowned by the beautiful garden of

the Villa Mattei. Moreover, the *Clivus Scauri* is bordered on the left by the walls of the basilica of Saints John and Paul, or *titulus Pammachii*, Pammachius being a Roman of distinction and a friend of Saint Jerome; while on the right it is lined by walls, in which it is said can be seen what remains of the library of Pope Agapitus.[24] Gregory's residence certainly extended along the Clivus Scauri. We must not think of it as a building of the pompeian style. That type of dwelling is almost unknown at Rome, where the private houses adapt themselves to the accidental conditions of the ground and to the lack of symmetry thus imposed. An idea can be formed of it from the remnants of the Roman house, discovered in the basement of the basilica of Saints John and Paul—doubtless a house of the third century, as is proved by its beautiful, pictorial pagan decoration. It had been restored at a later date, as is shown by the Christian paintings executed in the fourth century, and was a construction without a harmonious plan, and higher than it was broad, since it had two stories above its ground floor. The house of Saint Gregory, which was on the other side of the street, must have been a dwelling of the same sort, an old house several times rejuvenated and large enough to instal there a moderate-sized community. Gregory put his monastery under the patronage of the apostle Saint Andrew, brother of Saint Peter.

In a letter of 601 (J. 1816), the Pope thanks a Roman lady, who was a fugitive in Constantinople, for the alms she had given to the Monastery of Saint Andrew.[25] He says to her that this apostle takes such particularly good care of the monks of the community, that Saint Andrew might be truly called the abbot of the monastery. And Gregory, in order to edify the donor, relates to her the adventure of a monk, who, having concealed some coins (*nummi*) from a sum which he had been charged to bring to the monastery, was tormented by the devil until he had confessed his fault.

Gregory also relates the history of two other monks who had conceived the plan of escaping from the monastery, but who, owing to a miracle, had remained there. Two other monks succeeded in escaping, and pretended to be taking the Appian Way, "as if they were going to Jerusalem"; but they subsequently turned aside and hid themselves in the crypts outside of the Flaminian gate. When evening came, their flight was discovered, and men went out on horseback in search of them. Miraculously they were found in their hiding-place and were brought back to the monastery. Gregory assures the lady that this miracle made them better men, *miraculo meliorati*.

At the end of the ninth century, John the Deacon knew the monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, which had then passed into the hands of Greek monks (Vita G., IV, 82). The three oratories

which he mentions, that of the Blessed Virgin, that of Saint Severinus and that of Saint Barbara, do not appear to have been there at the time of Saint Gregory (IV, 88–89). John the Deacon speaks of an atrium, in the centre of which was a fountain, *nymphium*. In this atrium he points out two paintings, *iconiæ*.[26] The first represented Saint Peter seated, with a personage standing before him at his right, who was Gordianus, the father of Saint Gregory. The second painting represented his mother, Silvia, who was seated. The description which John the Deacon makes of these paintings is minute, and on that account is all the more suspicious, for the art of the seventh century did not admit of so many designs and shades of meaning. Silvia's portrait bore the inscription :

Gregorius Silviæ Matri Fecit

(IV, 83). Further on, in an *absidula*, beyond the pantry of the monks, John the Deacon saw the portrait of Saint Gregory "*in rota gypsea*," which he assures us was a work of the same artist (IV, 84). By *rota gypsea* is meant a medallion in stucco. John the Deacon describes its features minutely and with evident pleasure. Gregory, he says, had a face which recalled the elongated countenance of his father and the round face of his mother and more of a like kind ! That is literature. Let us retain the statement that Gregory, who, like Gordianus, wears a planeta on the dalmaticum (a

woollen chasuble worn over a linen tunic), which was the city dress of the good society of that time, wears also the bishop's pallium. Standing erect with his head bare, he holds the Gospel in his left hand and a cross in his right. Around his head is a square nimbus, by which, John the Deacon observes, living personages were indicated. It may be doubted whether this portrait was executed when Gregory was Pope.[27] A rather ordinary inscription completes it, which was composed, nevertheless, by Gregory himself: "O Christ, mighty Lord, to whom we owe the honour (of our post of bishop), with thy customary goodness, take it into thy hands to direct and to defend the office with which thou hast invested us."

Christe potens Domine nostri largitor honoris
Indultum officium solita pietate guberna.

Gregory shut himself up in his monastery, and the years that he spent there, after withdrawing from the world, were years of perfect joy. When he had subsequently become a bishop, overwhelmed by the cares of his office, his thoughts reverted to those years of retirement as the sweetest of his life. In the preface to his *Dialogues* he will write: "My poor mind, suffering from its present burden, as from a wound, remembers what it was formerly in the monastery." There, Gregory had to think of nothing but heavenly things, while now the affairs of worldly men crush him under their weight. "I weigh

what I must bear; I weigh what I have lost!" A similar complaint is found in the letter to Leander, which serves as a preface to the *Moralia*. "I had fled from the world, I had come to a monastery, as to a port, and I had saved myself, naked, from shipwreck, '*portum monasterii petii*.' It was when I was obliged to abandon it that I appreciated the peace of the cloister, '*quietem monasterii . . . perdendo cognovi*.'" We are thus made abundantly certain that Gregory was a monk.

He was not, however, at the head of his monastery. He speaks (*Dialog.*, IV, 21), of a holy religious named Valentio, who had first been at the head of a monastery in the province of Valeria. The Lombards had made his life there unbearable and he came to Rome, where, writes Gregory, he was the "superior of my monastery and of myself." Gregory, on leaving the highest magistracy of Rome, now sought nothing more than to obey!

Gregory of Tours assures us also that he sold his property and distributed the sum acquired thus among the poor; but that is perhaps merely a form of rhetoric. He adds that he who had been accustomed to show himself at Rome "clothed in silk and covered with glittering jewels," now wore only a common garment. Let us say simply that he had assumed the monastic robe, which was the rule for every monk. We will admire far more the fact that, "remaining in Rome, where

he had so many relations and where he had occupied such an exalted place, he had been able to find there retirement and silence." He has said: "When established in a monastery, I could spare my tongue every idle word and keep my mind continually fixed on the will to pray."[28]

With prayer came fasting, and the fasting caused infinite trouble to Gregory's weak stomach. He suffered, indeed, from such gastric disorders, that they threatened him with a complete breakdown, and these he could overcome only by taking nourishment frequently. But he persisted in fasting. On a certain holy Saturday, when "everybody, even little children, fast," he wrote, "I found myself incapable of doing so, and on the point of fainting—but more from my disappointment, than from my malady. I asked," he continued, "my saintly brother Eleutherius to come with me into the oratory and there I begged him to obtain from God by his prayers permission that I could fast that day. Eleutherius prayed. When, a moment later, he left the oratory, I no longer felt any trouble and was able to fast till evening. I no longer recognized myself, I attended the service of the monastery, and, when evening came, my strength was so great, that I could have fasted a day longer if I had wanted to" (*Dialog.*, III, 33).

We have in this narrative the avowal of the infirmity which was never to leave Gregory and was destined to grow worse with age. We have

seen in it also an indication of the part which was incumbent upon him in the administration of his monastery, "*in dispositione monasterii occupata mens.*" The word *dispositio* suggests the idea of temporal matters,[29] and we are surprised that Gregory was not relieved of this burden. We have also an indication of the existence of only one oratory in the monastery.[30] We shall, moreover, see that the monastery had within its enclosure its own cemetery.

Rome ought to have jealously preserved the house and monastery of Saint Gregory! The basilica which bears his name cannot be dated further back than the twelfth century.[31] Such as it is, rebuilt at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it is really the most correct in style, but also the barest and most colourless edifice in Rome. Nothing about it suggests the age and author of the *Dialogues*.

At the extremity of a terrace planted with a few cypresses, three chapels align themselves in a theatrical style of architecture, dedicated respectively to Saint Andrew, Saint Barbara, and Saint Sylvia. These are due to the munificence and piety of Cardinal Baronius, commendatory abbot of the Abbey of the *Clivus Scauri*.

It is stated that these small buildings rest upon the remains of an *opus reticulatum* of the time of the Empire and, on the right, it is still possible to see part of an excavated wall belonging to the enclosure in the era of the kings. But these relics

have no special interest for us, since they tell us nothing of Saint Gregory. Hence we have no desire to see trenches dug at the foot of the cypresses on the terrace or along the attractive vine-arbour of the kitchen garden. But in the absence here of vestiges of the past,[32] however authentic they may be, there is at least the atmosphere ; *" c' è l' aria "*—as a Franciscan remarked to Monsignor Duchesne on a certain feast day of Saint Francis, as he was conducting the reverend prelate through the Prisons ; and, in fact, between these walls and in this light floats all that lingers here of history.

The horizon is the same that the eyes of Saint Gregory beheld ; in front of his house was the Palatine, formerly the *arx imperii*, and in the foreground of the Palatine the palace of Septimus Severus, the *Septizonium ;* on the left, the Circus Maximus, where the king of the Ostrogoths Totila, in 549, held races for the last time ; on the right, the Flavian amphitheatre, not yet called the Coliseum, where the last gladiatorial combats were given in the time of Theodoric ; and still further, on the right, at the extremity of the Via Triumphalis, which separated the Cœlian Hill from the Palatine, stood the Arch of Constantine. The patrician home of Gregory was on the edge of that quarter of Rome which was richest in monuments, yet to-day a monastery could find solitude there.

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It was not possible that a Roman of the birth and talents of Gregory should be left by the Church of Rome in the seclusion which he had sought, on his renunciation of the world and in which his contemplative soul was so happy. In the designs of Providence, this initiation into the monastic life was to be merely a preparation for something more. We have grounds for believing that Pope Pelagius II (579–590), at the very commencement of his pontificate, decided to attach Gregory to his service.

If the document by which Gregory, prefect of Rome, made himself a guarantor of the *cautio* of Laurentius, bishop of Milan, dates from 574, then five years at most can be allowed to Gregory for his life in his monastery.

The pontificate of Pelagius II began on July 30, 579, amid the terrors of a siege of Rome made by the Lombards. It was necessary to proceed to the ordination of the Pope without waiting for the confirmation of his election by the emperor, who at that time was Tiberius II (578–582). Gregory, who could only yield to the will of the Pope concerning him, consented to be made deacon, whatever he might have to do, but he was still unaware of the fact that the Pontiff's intention was to send him at once to the court of Constantinople. The Pope indeed was not making him a deacon for service in one of the seven ecclesiastical departments of Rome, confided to the seven deacons of the Roman Church, but for the express mission of

"looking after things in an earthly palace." The papal envoys to Constantinople were almost always deacons of the Roman Church; but the man who was being sent thither this time, had the originality of being a monk. Assuredly, however, the former prefect of Rome was not unknown in Constantinople.

[1] H. Grisar, *Histoire de Rome et des Papes au Moyen Age*, ed. fran., I (1906), 86. L. Hulphen, *Les Barbares* (1926), 35–36, 90–93.

[2] L. Duchesne, *Hist. anc. de l'Eglise*, III (1910), 654. G. A. Punzi, *L'Italia nel VI sec. nelle Varie di Cassiodoro* (1927).

[3] *Coll. Avellan.* n. 114 (ed. Günther, 508).

[4] L. Duchesne, *L'Eglise au VI siècle* (1925), 238–243.

[5] C. Diehl, *Etudes sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Exarchat de Ravenna* (1888), 27–28.

[6] *Ibid.*, 172–178.

[7] Jaffe Loewenfeld, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* (1885–1888), n. 1631.

[8] *Lib. pontif.*, I, 377. Duchesne, "*Le Palatin chrétien.*" *Nuovo Bull. di archeol. crist.*, 1900, 19–20.

[9] J. Giraud, "Rome, ville sainte au V. siècle," *Compte rendu du Congrès scient. intern. des Cath.*, Fribourg, 1897, 106 *et seq.* A. Sepulcri, "I papiri della basilica di Monza e le reliquie inviate da Roma," *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1903, 241 *et seq.*

[10] *Lib. pontif.* I, 275, 276, 285, 296.

[11] As for Italy, the Patrimony was especially in Campania, in Tuscany, in Picenum, in Calabria, in Apulia and in Bruttium. The Lombards, wherever they were masters, pillaged the lands of the Holy See.

[12] In a letter to the Emperor Mauricius, in 595 (J. 1360): "Ecce cuncta in Europæ partibus barbarorum juri tradita. . . . Sæviunt et dominantur cotidie in necem fidelium cultores idolorum. . . ." For bibliography and the sources for the life of Saint Gregory, I

refer to the preface of F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great, his place in history and thought* (1905), and to Hans von Schubert, *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche im Frühmittelalter* (1917), 185–186.

The old lives of Gregory, that of the anonymous monk of Whitby, about 713 (edited by Dom Gasquet, 1904), that of Paul the Deacon, between 770 and 780, that of John the Deacon, written at the request of Pope John VIII (872–882), are of little interest for a critical history, because they have utilized original documents which we possess and because their own statements are most frequently without authority. But we have the incomparable collection of the letters of Saint Gregory, the critical edition of which was given out by Ewald (and Hartmann) in the *Monumenta Germaniæ* (1887 and 1899). To avoid all confusion in the designation of the letters, we shall mark them by the number which each one bears in the *Regesta* of Jaffe. Dudden is without high lights, but copious and elaborate.

The Church in the sixth century (1925), by Mgr. Duchesne, is for my narrative an introduction, to which I am infinitely indebted, as well as to the more didactic and truly masterly book of Schubert. What a pity that Duchesne died before having written the chapter on Saint Gregory, which was to be the last of his history and which would certainly have discouraged me from writing the present volume!

[13] *Lib. pontif.*, I, 253. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones christianæ*, I, 371–373. Dom Leclercq, art. "Grégoire le Grand," in the *Dict. archéol. chrét.*, VI, 1754–1758.

[14] *Lib. pontif.*, 265. In regard to this title, see F. Lanzoni, "I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica nella storia e nella legenda," *Rivista di archeologia christiana*, 1925, 208–210.

[15] De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 28.

[16] Cassiodorus, *Institut. div. litt. præf.* (P.L., LXX, 1105).

[17] We have no proof that this family is connected with the Anicii. See on J. 1532, in regard to *xenodochium Aniciorum*, the note of Ewald. And for the Anicii, Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopædie*, art. "Anicius."

[18] Diehl, 127. Schubert, 189.

[19] G. Paris, "La légende de Trajan," in *Mélang. hist. phil.* (1878), 261–298. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 447. The first confirmation of the legend of Trajan, freed from hell at the prayer of Gregory, is in the *Vita* of the monk of Whitby, n. 29 (ed. Gasquet, 38).

[20] *Dialog.*, IV, 35: "Dum adhuc laicus viverem, atque in domo mea quæ mihi in hac urbe ex jure patris obvenerat, manerem. . . ." The *Clivus Scauri* is mentioned in the twelfth century, as *Clivus Æmilii Scauri*. Among many Scauri there are six which are connected with the *family Æmilia*. Pauly-Wissowa, "Æmilius," n. 137–142. Cf. H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, II (1885), 594–595.

[21] *Lib. pontif.*, I, 303.

[22] *Ibid.*, 296.

[23] On this Rusticiana, Pauly-W., s.v.

[24] H. Grisar, San Gregorio Magno (1904), 6.

[25] This Roman lady is Rusticiana *patricia* of whom something will be said later. The question here is whether the metrical inscription in honour of the Mother of God (Inc.: *Virgo parens hac luce*), the last verse of which is

"protegat ille tuum Rusticiana genus"

was not composed in honour of Rusticiana *patricia*, rather than in honour of the wife of Boëthius, also called Rusticiana. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 109–110, publishes the text of the inscription, which he conjectures was placed in the paternal house of Gregory, but he has not thought of our Rusticiana.

[26] Saint Gregory was fond of *imagines*. When he was Pope, he learned that Serenus, the bishop of Marseilles, had ordered the *imagines* in the churches to be destroyed, under the pretext that some of the faithful worshipped them. The Pope blames the ill-conceived zeal of Serenus. "Painting," he writes him, "is of assistance to the illiterate in the churches; what they see painted on the walls is a book which they who do not know how to read, can yet read" (J. 1736). As Serenus pretended not to understand, Gregory returned to the subject and said: "Paintings are necessary for the illiterate, and ancient Christianity did right to allow that the histories of the

saints should be painted in the places worthy of veneration." Gregory is not surprised at the feeling manifested by the people of Marseilles against their bishop, and he is ready to proclaim these good people to be in the right (J. 1800). In the first of these two letters, it is plain that Serenus broke the pictures and threw them away ("imagines confregit atque projecit"). They may have been some sort of icons.

[27] See E. Wüscher-Becchi, "Sulla ricostruzione di tre dipinti descritti da Giovanni Diacono ed esistenti al suo tempo nel convento di S. Andrea ad Clivum Scauri," *Nuovo Bolletino di archeologia cristiana*, 1900, 235–251.

[28] *Homil. in Ezech.*, I, xi, 6.

[29] Compare the epitaph of the acolyte Innocentius (fourth century): *hic ob ecclesiasticam dispositionem itineribus sæpe laboravit nam iter usque in Græciis missus sæpe etiam Campaniam Calabriam et Apuliam postremo missus in Sardiniam ibi exit de sæculo.* Inscription published by O. Manecchi in *Miscellanea G. B. de Rossi*, 1924, II, 88.

[30] Let us not forget that the monasteries of that time possessed no right to have *missæ publicæ*. This point was settled by Pope Pelagius II, as Gregory will inform us (J. 1426). No *missæ publicæ*, that is to say masses of the bishop, and consequently no *cathedra* of the bishop. "*Sed sicut et consuetudo et præcepti tenor* (*of Pelagius II*) *eloquitur, si missas ibidem sibi celebrari voluerint, a te presbyter dirigatur.*" Gregory gives his reasons in a letter to the bishop of Rimini. No *missæ publicæ* celebrated by the bishop in the monastery of Saint Andrew of Rimini, "for fear that, in the retreat of the servants of God, one should give occasion for crowds of people and that the presence of too many women might give rise to scandal in simple-minded souls" (J. 1362). This formula: *missas illic publicas per episcopum fieri omnino prohibemus* is one that is found many times in the register of Saint Gregory. It was a rule of law.

[31] See V. Moschini, *S. Gregorio al Celio*, s.d., and the bibliography which accompanies it. See the plan of Grisar in the *Dict. archeol. chrét.*, VI, 1758.

[32] In 1890, a search in the cellars of the monastery

revealed the fact that, deep beneath the modern buildings, the old house still exists in a marvellous state of preservation, and might easily be excavated without impairing the stability of the church above. Unfortunately, the projected excavation has not been carried out. Dudden, I, 11.

CHAPTER II

SAINT GREGORY AT CONSTANTINOPLE

A RECENT historian of Saint Gregory has been pleased to describe the magnificence of Constantinople at that time: the animation of its lovely port, the Golden Horn; the richness of the city, the beauty of its architecture; the Sancta Sophia of Justinian resplendent with youth, and the imperial Court in its ceremonial grandeur. All of these must have greatly impressed Gregory and perhaps dazzled him.[1] But the more brilliant and animated the aspect of New Rome, *urbs regia*, was, the more melancholy must have been for Gregory the never to be forgotten picture of that ancient Rome which he had just left, of the solitude that had been created within its walls, and of the menaces which weighed upon her. Constantinople was then a city which was unique in the world, through which the life of what remained of the great Roman Empire still ebbed and flowed, and where the *basileus* personified its prestige.

Justinian (527–565), in a long and glorious reign which had re-established Roman domination "from one ocean to the other," had realized the

most systematic autocracy that had ever been seen. Distinguishing theoretically between the two domains of the priesthood and the empire, he considered that he had duties to perform to the former and occasionally conceived of these duties as an extension of his sovereignty. But he intended to be orthodox, only if he were free to dictate the orthodoxy himself; and he intended to be deferential to the priesthood, provided he were free to depose the bishops who opposed him; he also meant to leave to the Church the management of things divine, if he were at liberty to legislate on all ecclesiastical matters, under the pretence of sanctioning the canons. The apostolic See, which had grown great by the authority of a Saint Leo, a Gelasius, and a Hormisdas, was now really menaced by this Cæsarian papacy; and the maintenance of his prëeminence (*principatus*) was for the Pope a problem every day renewed. At the Council of Constantinople in 536, the patriarch Menas had declared: "Nothing of what is done in the most holy Church ought to be done without the advice and command of the emperor, and yet, as you know, we follow the Apostolic See and obey it; its communion is ours, and we condemn those whom it condemns." The coördination of these two authorities was for the universal Church "the Oriental question."[2] Tiberius II was the emperor whom Gregory found at Constantinople on arriving there. Gregory of Tours (VI, 30) praises this prince in the highest terms, especially for his

prudence, his justice, his impartial kindness to all and the universal sympathy which he had inspired. He contrasts the virtue and religion of Tiberius II with the fierce avarice of Justin II and his suspicious orthodoxy. The severe measures used by Justin II against the dissenting Monophysites had been inefficacious, and the attempts at compromise had also been without result. Under Tiberius II, the severe measures and negotiations had, however, been given up; and we do not see that Gregory complains of this policy of non-intervention.

The patriarch of Constantinople was Eutychios. Promoted to the office by the favour of Justinian in 552, he presided a year later over the Council which conceded to Justinian the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Eutychios was the right-hand man of Justinian until 565, and almost to the end of the emperor's reign. But, at the last hour, for reasons which are not all clear, Eutychios was deposed and exiled by Justinian and was recalled only in 577, when the patriarch whom Justinian had put in his place was dead. Restored after twelve years of exile, Eutychios played at first the part of a confessor; but Rome had little confidence in him, and in fact, Rome has hardly ever placed confidence in the bishops of Constantinople.

Gregory did not know Greek, which was a serious badge of inferiority in Constantinople. At the Court, in the official world, and among the Roman

fugitives, Latin of course was spoken, but with the Oriental clergy which knew only Greek, not to mention the priests of the Syrian tongue, relations could not be otherwise than limited.

Byzantine culture was thenceforth for Rome an inaccessible world. Yet the age of Justinian had produced not only legislation, it had created a redundant ecclesiastical literature, the value of which it would be wrong to depreciate.[3] In return for the definitive condemnation of Origen at the Council in 553, a thoroughly Aristotelian theology gave rise to the first authentic theological system of the Scholastics. And as a reaction from that speculative dogmatic theology, the mystical dogmatic system under the name of the pseudo-areopagite Denys gained its reputation. Gregory appears to have known neither Leontius of Byzantium, the inspirer of the personal theology of Justinian, nor the pseudo-Denys. Nor does he seem to have heard of the Aristotelian philosophy of John Philoponos, the Alexandrian who was then in all the glory of his fame, since, as an ardent Monophysite, he had written against "Hellenism" (Iamblichus, Proclus), and also against the Council of Chalcedon.[4] About 570, he had also published a book on the resurrection of the dead (Περὶ ἀναστάσεως). Like a good Aristotelian, he distinguished between the matter and form of the body, and maintained that, through death, the matter of the body fell into the "indeterminate," and therefore for a resurrection it

would be necessary that new matter should be formed. The resurrection would thus resemble a new creation. The patriarch Eutychios inclined to this doctrine.

Gregory relates (*Moral.*, XIV, 72-74) that Eutychios had announced in a book that our resurrected body will be impalpable, more subtile than the wind and air. Gregory was made uneasy by this. Our body will indeed be subtile, he thought, but certainly not impalpable; it will be subtile "*per effectum spiritalis potentiæ*," but palpable "*per veritatem naturæ*." Gregory, who had nothing Aristotelian in him, was acquainted with Scripture; and Christ had said: "Touch me and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me to have." Eutychios replied to Gregory, probably in a conference that they had together, and Gregory has given us a résumé of their respective arguments. But Eutychios did not yield to the reasons presented by Gregory, and there was a possibility that all this would end in a rupture of friendly relations.

The good emperor Tiberius II intervened. He sent privately for the patriarch and the papal envoy and had the subject of their disagreement explained to him; then, after weighing the statements of both parties, he decided that the truth was on the side of Gregory. As for the book which Eutychios had published about the resurrection, the emperor asked himself if he ought not to condemn it to be burned. Whether the patriarch

and envoy left the imperial audience reconciled, we do not know, but it soon happened that both of them fell ill. Eutychios died, but before dying, retracted what he had written, in terms which must have satisfied Gregory. The latter, finding that no one was persisting in the error which the deceased had for a time believed, saw no reason why he should pursue the matter further—*dissimulavi cœpta persequi*. Such a prosecution might indeed have led too far.

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Tiberius II died on August 14, 582, only a short time after the death of Eutychios (April 5). His last hour having come, the good emperor appointed to succeed him an officer named Mauricius, who had distinguished himself in the war. He also gave to him his daughter in marriage. Both the accession to the throne and the wedding were celebrated at the same time. Gregory had known Mauricius before his advent to the imperial power, and this permitted him to write to him one day: "You were my Lord, when you were not yet the Lord of all,"[5] and, as we are informed by the *Historia Francorum* (X, 1), he was one day to baptize the son of Mauricius, the first born of his children.

The patriarch who succeeded Eutychios was John the Faster, elected on April 11, 582. Gregory, who was subsequently to have serious trouble with John, at first highly prized his virtue

Through him we know that John had not sought the episcopate, but on the contrary had wished to escape it by flight and had declared himself unworthy of it. Gregory was at Constantinople at the moment of the election; "*fugisse velle te memini*" he was to write to John later. He was to remind him also that, when John became patriarch, he had found religious peace assured and concord in the churches. That is saying a great deal; but perhaps Gregory thought only of the cordial relations then existing between Constantinople and the apostolic See. Meanwhile, until Gregory's return to Rome, at the expiration of his office as nuncio, nothing in the least altered his good relations with the patriarch John.

Gregory, who had no intention of giving up his monastic life, had brought with him to Constantinople a certain number of monks from his monastery on the Clivus Scauri, and among them even the superior of the monastery, the priest Maximianus. In 584, Pope Pelagius II called Maximianus back to Rome by a letter which we possess and which is dated October 4 (J. 1052). Gregory relates in the *Dialogues* (III, 36) that Maximianus, "returning to my monastery in Rome," experienced in the Adriatic a storm, in which the sails of the ship were carried out to sea, the mast was broken, the entire hull dislocated, and the hold invaded by water. The passengers, believing that they were lost, "gave one another the kiss of peace, received the body and blood of

the Redeemer," and commended their souls to God. The ship, however, held out for eight days more, and on the ninth reached Cotrona. But hardly had the passengers disembarked—Maximianus being the last to leave—when the vessel sank. Manifestly God was watching over Maximianus, who, adds Gregory, is now bishop of Syracuse. The Pope's letter recalling Maximianus from Constantinople to Rome announced another piece of news to Gregory. Pelagius II writes to his "dear son and venerable deacon," that he is sending him the bishop Sebastian,[6] accompanied by the notary Honoratus, with the necessary instructions. Sebastian, continues the Pope, has been "in these parts" (Rome) and gone as far as Ravenna, with the patrician Decius, and what he will bring you will inform you of everything; he will also suggest to the emperor what is necessary.

We discover in this letter of the Pope another reason for Gregory's mission. He is to promote the interests of Rome and Italy with the emperor. "So great," continues Pelagius, "are the calamities and tribulations which we suffer from the perfidy of the Lombards, in spite of their solemn promises, that nobody can adequately describe them. As to our brother Sebastian, you will learn by what he will tell you how we have welcomed him and what brotherly love he has found with us, owing to your recommendation" (*te suggerente*).

"He has promised us," pursues the Pope, "to portray to the most pious emperor the necessities

and the perils of all Italy. Deliberate together what you can do to relieve our distress promptly. The Republic is in such a critical situation, that, if God does not inspire the prince's heart to show to his subjects the pity he feels for them and to grant us a general (*magister militum*) or a duke (*dux*), we are lost.

"The territory around Rome (*partes romanæ*) is without any garrison. The Exarch writes that he can do nothing for us, being unable himself to defend the region of Ravenna. May God bid the emperor to come to our aid at the earliest possible moment in the perils which are closing in upon us, before the army of that impious nation, the Lombards, shall have seized the lands which still form part of the empire!"

A heartrending letter truly! The Exarch is scarcely able to protect Ravenna, and declares himself incapable of helping Rome! While the Pope, who is counted on perhaps to defend Rome, has neither troops, a general, nor money. He can only turn to the emperor; but the emperor, who has the Persians on his hands, must leave Italy to defend herself. He is not indifferent, but he is without the necessary means to do otherwise. We do not know what the emperor replied to Pope Pelagius II as well as to the entreaties of Gregory and Sebastian. But we find in the letter which Pelagius II addressed to Eliah and to the bishops of Istria, in 586, that "God has deigned to give to Italy for a time peace and tranquillity

for the happiness of the Christian princes, thanks to the labours and the solicitude of our son, the most excellent Smaragdus, Exarch and *chartularius sacri palatii*" (J. 1054).

Meanwhile, the loyalty of the Pope to the emperor is not affected by all these vicissitudes. His attachment to him is due, not only to his hatred of the Arian Lombards, but to a thoroughly Roman sentiment of fidelity to the Republic. It is an attachment born of a sense of honour. We possess the text of an inscription which Pelagius II placed in the altar (*in altare*)[7] of Saint Peter's, to commemorate some decorations which he had made there, and in this inscription we see him declare that he and his people make this offering to God:

"In order that the Roman sceptres may be guided by the divine hand and that under their empire the true faith may have liberty."

(*Ut Romana manu cælesti sceptra regantur sit quorum imperio libera vera fides*).

The Roman bishop also prays God to give to the sovereigns (Mauricius and his son Theodosius) peaceful years.

May the enemies of the Roman name be vanquished throughout the entire world by the virtue of Saint Peter, and may peace be assured to the nations and with it also the Catholic faith!

(*Hostibus ut domitis Petri virtute per orbem Gentibus ac populis pax sit et ista fides*).

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At Constantinople Gregory met Leander, bishop of Seville, who, he tells us, had come to the East on a mission for the interests of the Catholic faith in Spain. Seville then belonged to the kingdom of the Visigoths, whose sovereign was Leovigild; but Leander was not at Constantinople for the sake of that Arian king. His mission had been given him only by Hermenigild, who was a Catholic and who, having revolted against his father, Leovigild, wished to make sure of the support of the Byzantines. Hermenigild had been converted to Catholicism by Leander (*Dialog.*, III, 31). But the revolt of Hermenigild (579–584) was crushed and he himself put to death (April 13, 585). The meeting of Leander and Gregory at Constantinople led to a close intimacy between them, as was natural, for they were both of high birth and both were monks and writers. Gregory (*ibid.*) speaks of Leander very affectionately; and found in this friendship (*mihi in amicitiis familiariter juncto*) rest from the cares of official matters, driven hither and thither, as he was, by the flood of worldly duties, of which, as a monk whose vocation has been violated,[8] he often complains. He found, however, sufficient leisure to meditate upon the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, he began the composition of his commentary on the book on Job at the request of Leander and the monks of his community at Constantinople, and finished it at Rome, when he had become Pope. Of this we shall speak later.

Let us note, as another trait of his character, that this contemplative, who had wanted to flee from the world, possessed the gift of making friends and the tenderness to love them. It is true, he does not seem to have been on very confidential terms with the emperor Mauricius, and we shall see what extreme care he had to use with this reserved sovereign, who was jealous of his omnipotence and destined to leave behind him so few regrets. But how many steadfast friends Gregory had at the Court itself! Among them, for example, were Theodorus, the emperor's physician, and the commander of the guards (*Comes excubitorum*), Philippicus. In a letter which Gregory will write one day to the patrician Narses, the general in chief at the time of Mauricius, illustrious by his campaigns against the Persians, we have the proof that the whole entourage of the patrician was on friendly terms with Gregory. For he writes: Give my salutations to "*dominum Alexandrum, dominum Theodorum, filium meum Marinum, dominam Esyciam, dominam Eudochiam et dominam Dominicam*" (J. 1073).

Another letter informs us that *domina* (Gregory uses in all these titles the older forms *domnus* and *domna*) Dominica, who was apparently a lady of honour to the empress, has been placed at the head of a community, and that she henceforth will not be "constrained to serve in the work of the earthly palace" (1473).

Gregory knew also another lady, named Gre-

goria, who was attached to the service of the empress' bed-chamber (*cubicularia Augustæ*), and we have from him a gracious, fatherly letter, in which he replies to her scruples of conscience (J. 1468).

Theoktista, the sister of the emperor Mauricius, had charge of the latter's children ; in the ancient meaning of the word, she was their "nurse." "I beg of you," Gregory writes to her, "that you take great care in forming the character of the little princes whom you are bringing up (*parvulos dominos quos nutritis*)." She must see to it that "the illustrious eunuchs" who are attached to their service address them only in language capable of developing love between themselves and gentleness towards their inferiors (J. 1469). The empress Constantina herself, daughter of Tiberius II and wife of Mauricius, was far from being indifferent to Gregory. In this same letter we see that he counts on Theoktista to give him news of the *serenissima domina*, that is, news of the empress' private life, her spiritual consolations and her reading. Gregory was no doubt a director of the consciences of women, and the empress had unquestionably confided to him the secrets of her soul.

Much has been written about "Cicero and his friends." Would that we were sufficiently well documented to write of Gregory and his friends! But we have at least five letters addressed by him to the same friend, a great Roman lady who had

taken refuge in Constantinople. These five letters extend over a period of several years, and in them we discover proofs of the confidence which Gregory's friends placed in him, and the solicitude, fidelity, and affection that Gregory gave them in return. Here is one of these letters :

Gregory to Rusticiana *patricia*.[9]

" On receiving the letter of your excellency, I was comforted by the news of your health which I had hoped for. May the Lord, in his mercy, protect and dispose of your life and your acts !

" I was very much surprised to learn that you have given up your idea of visiting the Holy Places and have entirely abandoned this pious plan. When, by the gift of God, our hearts conceive of some good design, we should always hasten to carry it out devoutly, for fear that the wily enemy may try to hinder us by suggesting obstacles, on account of which our minds, overwhelmed already with daily tasks, will be dissuaded from realizing their good desires. Your excellency must oppose with religious reasons all such suggested difficulties, so that, through the effort of your whole heart, you may hunger for the fruit of the good project which you formed ; and your reward will be that in the present world you will live in peace, and in the life to come will deserve to possess the heavenly kingdom.

" As to what you have written me, namely, that Passivus has attempted to circulate calumnies

against you, but that the most pious sovereigns have not received them as true and have even resented them, you will realize from whom this favour comes, and will put all your hope in Him who prevents the men of this world from doing as much injury as they would like to do, and who breaks perverse wills by the power of his arm and frustrates their efforts in his usual merciful way. I pray you to salute for me *domnus* Appio and *domna* Eusebia, *domnus* Eudoxius, and *domna* Gregoria."

Rusticiana belonged to the society of the Court, and was a friend of Gregoria, who, as we have seen, was attached to the suite of the empress. The attempt had been made to injure Rusticiana in the eyes of the emperor, and she had confided her anxieties to her friend, the Pope. Gregory encouraged her to put her confidence in God, and also to persist in her plan of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Places. Note the pretty observation about the necessity of carrying out our good intentions at once, for fear that the devil, under the pretence of prudence, may suggest to us too many reasons to abandon them. Another letter to the same lady:

Gregory to Rusticiana *patricia*.[16]

"The letter which I received from your Excellency has given me the pleasure of learning that you had really gone to Mount Sinai. You may well believe, I would gladly have gone thither

with you, but not to return, as you have done. It is very difficult, however, for me to believe that you have really been to the Holy Places and that you have seen there many monks (*patres multos*) ; for, if you had been so much edified, you would not have been able to go back to Constantinople so soon. If the love of Constantinople has not died out in your heart, it is, I suspect, because your Excellency saw the Holy Places with your eyes only, and could not attach to them your heart.

" May Almighty God illumine your mind with the grace of his piety and give you a love for it ; and may he teach you to realize how fleeting are all the things of time. Even while we are speaking, time is speeding onward and the Judge is at hand ; and this world, which we do not wish to leave of our own accord, we shall have to leave, in spite of ourselves, at a moment which is rapidly approaching.

" I beg you to salute for me *domnus* Appio, *domna* Eusebia and their daughters."

Therefore, Rusticiana really did make the pilgrimage to the Holy Places, and even went on as far as the holy mountain of Sinai, peopled with monks. Gregory, somewhat maliciously, expresses his astonishment that after having been so edified, she could return so quickly. Ah ! how *he* would have liked " never more to leave Mount Sinai," if he had once gone thither ![11] Eternity alone is worth the trouble of thinking about.

Gregory to Rusticiana *patricia*.[12]

"I remember to have written your Excellency long ago and to have frequently urged you to hasten to see again the abode (*limina*) of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles. How anyone can be seduced by Constantinople and how anyone can forget Rome, I do not know, and I have not as yet been deemed worthy to receive from you any explanation on that point. How much a return to Rome could aid your soul to obtain merits for the life eternal, and how much this return would benefit in every way your illustrious daughter, *domna* Eusebia, we can well imagine and you can imagine still better. My son Peter, your man of affairs,[13] who has more judgement than his age would lead one to suppose, and who, I know, is a person of mature reflection, can be questioned by you; and he will tell you how much affection all the inhabitants of this city have for your Excellency, and how they desire to be sufficiently worthy to see you again! If the Lord gives us in the Holy Scriptures the precept to love our enemies, let us consider what a fault it is not to love those who love us. We are told that we are loved, but we know very well that no one can love those whom one does not wish to see.

"If you are afraid of the swords and wars of Italy, you should consider religiously how great is the protection at Rome of blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, in that city, where, however

reduced its population may be, and however deprived of military aid, we have been for so many years protected by God, unwounded in the midst of swords.

" We say this to you because we love you. May Almighty God give you all that he knows can be of benefit to your soul in eternity and to the reputation of your house in this present world ! "

Here it is the Roman of Rome who reproaches a Roman patrician lady for having fled from Rome to take refuge in Constantinople. He has urged her many times to return. Can one forget Rome ? Is not Rome the one place in the whole world where Rusticiana and her children have their place assigned to them by Providence ? They have interests and still more affections there which call them to return.

Let Rusticiana consider the honour of her house ! Let her not be afraid of war ! War is always endemic in Italy. But Rome is under the protection of Saint Peter, who guards her well.

Gregory to Rusticiana *patricia*.[14]

" I have received the letter of your Excellency, which should have relieved me from the very serious affliction from which I suffer, by all the salutary, devout, and affectionate words you write me. But one thing has displeased me. It is to see that, in writing me, you have called yourself, not once only, but several times, my *servant*. I who, on becoming bishop, became the servant of

all, ask you what reason you have to call yourself my servant, when even before becoming bishop, I was yours? I beg you, therefore, in the name of Almighty God, not to let me find that word ever again in the letters that you write me!

"The presents, which you have sent from a most pure and sincere heart to blessed Peter prince of the apostles, have been received in the presence of all the clergy and have been hung in their places. My son, the *vir magnificus domnus Symmachus*, who found me ill with the gout and in an almost desperate condition, deferred giving me your letter, and only handed it to me long after your *vela* were in place. Then only have we discovered in the letter of your Excellency that these *vela* ought to have been taken to the church of the blessed Peter on a day of litany. It has not been done, because, as I have said, the *vela* reached me before your letter. Symmachus, with all the members of your household, had done what you wished that we should do with the clergy. If voices have been wanting on that occasion, your offering will have its voice in the presence of Almighty God. I have confidence in the mercy of him, whose earthly body you wished to cover; his intercession in heaven will protect you from all sin, and he will direct your entire household by his counsel and guard it by his vigilance."

Rusticiana had sent to the Pope for the basilica of Saint Peter some of those curtains or precious tapestries, which we know were very much

admired at that time, and we are aware what a sumptuous decoration they made in the churches.

We shall meet Rusticiana again, but not at Rome, for he will not succeed in inducing her to come thither.

* * * * *

Gregory remained in Constantinople at the orders of Pope Pelagius II, until the day when the latter recalled him. We do not know the year of his return, but it is supposed to be the beginning of 586.[15]

Deacon though he was, it would have been surprising if he had not taken up his residence in his beloved monastery on the Clivus Scauri, of which Maximianus was the abbot.[16] There he resumed his regular life and habits of study, that is to say, meditation on the Holy Scriptures. It is supposed that he at this time commented to the monks of Clivus Scauri on the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, the Prophets, the Kings, and the first seven Books of the Old Testament; but he did not have the leisure to write down these commentaries, which Claudius, treated by Gregory as "*carissimus quondam filius*," wished to put into writing.[17] Gregory, however, was not satisfied with his editing of them, in which he no longer recognized himself, and so nothing authentic has remained to us of these commentaries. Gregory was already at that epoch considered to be a man of the greatest learning. Of this we have the

testimony of Gregory of Tours, who writes that he had been so well educated in letters, grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, that he was thought to be inferior to no one in Rome. We, who are able to appraise the grammar, rhetoric, and general culture of our dear Saint, are tempted to smile at this exaggeration. One finds in him scarcely a trace of his having read the Latin classics. Because he once says "*O tempora, O mores,*" it must not be imagined that he was familiar with Cicero. But at least he did know Seneca![18] His Latin has not the rustic character of that of Gregory of Tours; it is the Latin spoken by the good Roman society of the time. It is conversational Latin, but not polished Latin. Gregory, when all is said and done, was self-taught, and he displays at times an ignorance which is astonishing. With all that, he may have been the best educated man in Rome, at a time when culture there was rapidly declining.

Pope Pelagius II kept his deacon Gregory busy, but let us not commit the anachronism of saying that he had made him a cardinal. On the authority of Paul the Deacon,[19] it is believed that the Pope called for his assistance to put an end to the schism of Aquileia, that is, to reconcile to Rome the bishops of Istria who had broken with Pope Vigilius, when the latter had consented to the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Pelagius II now addressed to the bishops of Istria three doctrinal letters, which were both urgent and

clever, one of which (the third) is thought to be the work of Gregory. However, the negotiation of Pelagius II did not obtain the least concession from the Istrian episcopate, which was likewise to resist the advances of Gregory, when he had become Pope.

At Rome, as we have said, a close watch was kept over the bishops of the imperial Byzantine city, who were always objects of suspicion. Now it happened that the bishop of Antioch (who also bore the name of Gregory) was in conflict with the Count of the Orient and was persecuted with calumnies which incited his entire flock against him. He therefore " appealed to the emperor and to the Council." They granted him the judges he asked for, that is to say, a tribunal composed of bishops, to whom were added some members of the " sacred senate." The accused exonerated himself, and his accusers were put to confusion. But it happened also that the official records of this " synod " were sent to Rome and that Pope Pelagius II was able to verify the fact that the patriarch of Constantinople had been given in these documents the title " universal " (œcumenical) as if his authority extended over the whole empire.

Pelagius wrote severely to John the Faster, declared the documents of the aforesaid synod null and void, because it had employed this sinful expression of pride (*nefandum elationis vocabulum*), and he forbade his nuncio at Constantinople to

take part in the solemnities of the patriarch's masses (*solemnia missarum*).[20]

The Pope did not annul the sentence which absolved the bishop of Antioch from the calumnies uttered against him, but he intended to protest—and solemnly and with all the authority of Saint Peter to protest—against the usurpation by the patriarch of the title of "universal."

We are surprised to see this great storm burst forth so suddenly. For the title of "universal" was not new. Was the patriarch, in allowing himself to be treated as "œcumenical," failing to carry out an engagement which he had made? Such a hypothesis might be thought of, but as a matter of fact, Rome saw in this a provocation and would not tolerate it. In any case, Pelagius II was drawing near to the end of his pontificate. A terrible inundation of the Tiber desolated Rome in 589, and this was followed by the plague. It was not the first plague from which Rome had suffered, but this one was of exceptional severity. Rome was veritably depopulated, and three years later, Gregory with a thrill of horror wrote (*Dialog.*, IV, 36): "One saw with one's own eyes arrows shoot from heaven and strike the people one by one." In the month of January 590, Pelagus was attacked by the epidemic and died.

[1] Dudden, I, 123–136. Schubert, 102, estimates the cost of the construction of Sancta Sophia at 361,000,000 gold marks.

[2] P. Batiffol, "L'empereur Justinien et le siège apostolique," *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1926, 193–264.

[3] Schubert, 123–141.

[4] J. Maspero, *Hist. des patriarches d'Alexandrie*. (1923.)

[5] J. 1266. August, 593 A.D.

[6] Sebastian was bishop of Risano, near Cattaro, in Illyrium, J. 1096.

[7] De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 145.

[8] We have a specimen of these secular affairs in a question concerning the islands which belonged to the city of Naples, the right of ownership being contested. Gregory obtained from the emperor Mauricius some *jussiones*, which confirmed this ownership. (J. 1570.)

[9] J. 1180, April 592.

[10] J. 1316, August 594.

[11] We have two letters of Pope Gregory to Sinai. In one he commends himself to the prayers of the monks and sends them blankets and mattresses for their almshouses (*gerontocomium*). In the other he replies to the letter which he had received from the priest Palladius and commends himself to his prayers. He also sends him, with the "*benediction of Saint Peter*," a tunic and a cowl. (J. 1792 and 1791, August 600.)

[12] J. 1510, May 598.

[13] "*Filium meum Petrum, hominem vestrum. . . .*" *Homo* in the sense of agent, *actionarius*.

[14] J. 1816, February 601. See previous note.

[15] Baronius, *Annales*, ad ann. 586, XXV, believes that Gregory brought back from Constantinople for his monastery an arm of Saint Andrew and the head of Saint Luke, which the emperor is thought to have given him.

[16] It is a disputed point whether Gregory was ever abbot of his monastery. (Dudden, I, 187; Schubert, 190). The donation made by Gregory to his monastery, the text of which has been preserved, dates from December 28, 587. It is reproduced in Ewald-Hartmann, II, 437–439. Maximianus was the abbot, Gregory bears the title of "Unworthy deacon of the apostolic See" (indignus diaconus apostolicæ sedis). At the end of 590, Gregory, who had become Pope, confirmed the donation made in

587, by a document addressed to Maximianus, still abbot of the monastery (J. 1082). Concerning this document see Ewald's note, I, 14.

[17] J. 1857. January 602. Claudius must have been dead when Gregory wrote this letter. He had been made abbot of the monastery of Saints John and Stephen, at Classis, at the gates of Ravenna.

[18] I think of the letter of Gregory (J. 1103, March 591) to the patrician Venantius, who had abandoned the monastic life to re-enter the world: "Scio quia, cum epistola mea suscipitur, protinus amici conveniunt, litterati clientes vocantur, et de causa vitæ consilium a fautoribus mortis quæritur. . . ." Gregory continues: "Ut tibi aliquid sæcularis auctoris loquar, cum amicis omnia tractanda sunt, sed prius de ipsis." It is thought to be a reminiscence of Seneca, *Epistul.* III. Moreover, of the hostility which Gregory professes against pagan literature there can be no doubt, when one has read the letter which he wrote to Desiderius, bishop of Vienne, to reproach him for his literary tastes: "In uno se ore cum Jovis laudibus Christi laudes non capiunt, et quam grave nefandumque sit episcopis canere quod nec laico religioso conveniat ipse considera" (J. 1824, June 601).

[19] Histor. Langobard., II, 20 (ed. Bethmann-Waitz, 103).

[20] These facts are reported by Saint Gregory, J. 1357, June 1, 595.

CHAPTER III

SAINT GREGORY'S ACCESSION TO THE PONTIFICATE

THE vacancy of the Holy See which followed the death of Pelagius II lasted six months and twenty-five days, but in reality Rome proceeded with as little delay as possible to the election of his successor. The inundation had swept away the church's granaries of wheat, and the plague continued to devastate the city, but it was impossible to remain without a bishop. The people were unanimous in demanding the deacon Gregory for Pope. At that time, that is to say, ever since the reign of Justinian, a command (*jussio*) from the emperor was necessary for the ordination of the Pope elect; and Gregory, who had, however, secretly formed his own plan, felt obliged to observe this rule, although it had not been followed in the case of Pelagius II.

It was understood that, even without being ordained, the Pope elect should assume the government of the Roman Church. The *Historia Francorum* quotes a sermon, delivered by Gregory on the day after his election, while the plague was still raging:

"Dearly beloved brethren, it is necessary that

the scourges of God, whose coming we ought to have feared, should inspire us with fear when we are passing through the affliction. Let our anguish open for us the way to conversion; let the pain which we endure triumph over the hardness of our hearts. . . . All the people have been put to the edge of the sword of God's wrath. . . . Many are struck down and carried off without having been able to be converted or to lament over their sins in penitence. Think what it means to appear before the severe Judge, when one has not had time to weep over what one has done."

Gregory begged his people to restrain by their penitence the arm of God. He ordered a processional litany, in which all should take part, and which should go to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. The people were to unite in groups at daybreak on a Wednesday; the clergy at the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the monks with their abbots at Saints Gervase and Protase, the nuns with their abbesses at Saints Peter and Marcellinus, the children at Saints John and Paul, the laity at Saint Stephen's, the widows at Saint Euphemia's, the married women at Saint Clement's, seven groups in all, and each group led by the clergy of one of the city's seven departments. From the description of the deacon of Gregory of Tours, who was present at these scenes, the *Historia Francorum* composed this thrilling recital:

"The procession ordered for Wednesday took place three days in succession; the columns advanced through the streets of the city chanting *Kyrie eleison*, while the plague was still raging; and as they marched, people were seen falling and dying about them! Gregory inspired these poor people with courage, for he did not stop preaching, and wished that prayers should be made continually."

By devoting himself thus to the service of all, Gregory justified the choice that all had made of him; but it was a choice which he himself had determined to decline. According to the *Historia Francorum*, he wrote a letter to the emperor Mauricius, conjuring him not to confirm the election and to relieve him from the honour to which the people wished to elevate him. At the same time, he stirred up the friends he had at Constantinople to intercede for him to the same end. From a letter which he wrote a few days after his ordination to the patriarch, John the Faster, it may be inferred that he had counted upon him to support his entreaty. He wrote: "I know with what energy you yourself declined the terrible burden of the episcopate, when you were raised to it, and yet you have done nothing to prevent this same burden being laid on me." Gregory was also obliged to supplicate Theoktista, the sister of the emperor. "Your former kindnesses," he subsequently wrote to her, "have failed me in this trial which, under cover of making

me a bishop, brings me back into the world. I shall now have to look after earthly interests more than I did when I was ' in the path of the laity ' " —an allusion to his career as a government functionary. " It is all over with the joys of my repose ; the contemplative life escapes me ; my heart fails me." Gregory complains in similar terms to the patrician John, to the commander of the guards (*comes excubitorum*) Philip, and to the former bishop of Antioch, Anastasius, residing at Constantinople. He had counted on their devotion, but they all betrayed him for the good of the Church and for the confusion of his humility. The *præfectus urbis Romæ* also played a rôle in the election of the Pope, for the *Historia Francorum* informs us that this official not only kept back Gregory's letters to the emperor in which he begged him not to confirm his election, but sent word to the sovereign that the popular vote in Rome on Gregory's name had been unanimous. The prefect was with reason completely won over to the election of Gregory, and the emperor no less so, and according to the *Historia Francorum*, the latter gave thanks to God for the event. He had, as we know, a strong friendship for Gregory, and was rejoiced to hear of the honour which he had so well deserved. He therefore confirmed it : " *data præceptione jussit eum institui.*"

This was too much for Gregory. He wanted to flee from Rome. But the authorities made sure of his person and took him by force to the basilica

of Saint Peter, where he was consecrated on September 3, 590.

The sadness which his election caused him overflows in the letters which he writes to the friends who sent him their congratulations. It seems certain that the Pope was genuinely and before all else a monk, who could not be consoled for having been forced to leave the contemplative life. Thus he wrote to the patrician Narses at Constantinople :[1]

" In portraying to me in such eloquent terms the sweetness of contemplation, you renew the grief which I feel at my own ruin ; for you speak to me of all that I inwardly lost, when I outwardly ascended, without having deserved it, to the summit of power. Know that my sorrow is so great, that I can hardly express it. The darkness caused by my melancholy obscures my vision. Everything I see is mournful and all that people think will console me is lamentable to my heart."

To his friend Saint Leander, bishop of Seville, he writes :[2]

" I should have been sincerely glad to answer your letter, if the labour of the pastoral office did not crush me to such a point that I would rather weep than speak. Your reverence has no doubt fully understood this merely from reading my letters, because I speak without restraint to one whom I so strongly love. I am indeed tossed about in this post of mine by the waves of the world, and these are so violent ; and the old

ship which the secret design of God has given me to command, is so rotten, that I despair of bringing it to port. Sometimes the surges hurl themselves upon us from the front, at other times they heap their foaming masses on our flanks, or follow us astern. In the midst of this wild outburst of the elements, I still, though greatly agitated, hold the helm. Now I directly face the storm, and now, as the ship reels to one side, I manage to avoid the onset of the billows by a sudden turn. I groan aloud, because, from a neglect to clean it, the sink of vices in the hold is now increasing, and because in the fearful hurricane through which we are passing the rotten planks make cracking sounds only too ominous of shipwreck. Through tears I see again the tranquil shore of my repose, which I have lost, and sigh, as I behold the land which the violence of the winds prevents me from approaching.

"If you love me, dearest brother, hold out to me the hand of prayer amid these billows with which I contend. It will be a help to me, and the merits which it will bring to you will render you more valiant in your own labours!"

The rotten ship, whose wretched condition Gregory describes, is not the symbolic barque of Peter; it is *Rome;* it is its people struggling against all sorts of attacks at the same time. It is necessary for Gregory to see to the security of the city against a sudden assault of the Lombards; yet at the same moment the Roman garrison has

gone on strike, no doubt because it has received no pay. In the first days after his accession, Gregory wrote to a high functionary who was to arrive in Rome: "When you also shall be kept in Rome, bound by the service you will have assumed, you will know what sorrow and bitterness I suffer. On the arrival of His Magnificence, *domnus* Maurencius, the new commander (*magister militum*), I beg you to unite and come to the rescue of the city of Rome, for we are constantly threatened from without by the swords of our enemies, and from within by a peril equally serious, though in another way—by the sedition of the soldiers."[3] Gregory knows that famine is lying in wait for his people; and to make sure of the provisioning of Rome, it is necessary that the wheat from Sicily should arrive promptly. He writes to the praetor of Sicily to see to it that there is no diminution in the quantity sent, because, if there is a lack, "it will not be one man only, it will be the whole population that will suffer simultaneously."[4]

The plague, incredible as it seemed, had at last ceased; but what ravages it had made among the inhabitants of Rome! Preaching in the basilica of Saint Peter, on the second Sunday of Advent, 590, Gregory had under his eyes a decimated people.

"Of the innumerable people you once were," he said to them, "see how few are now left! And still, every day, pestilences are raging,

unforeseen catastrophes fall upon us, and new and sudden disasters afflict us. . . . The day before yesterday, you have seen a hurricane uproot in a moment aged trees, overturn houses, and destroy churches to their very foundations. How many, who, safe and sound the evening before, thought of what they would do on the morrow, have been during the night snatched away by instant death and buried in the ruins (of the city) ! "[5]

Then Gregory returns to the thought, which is so familiar to him, of the imminent end of the world. If a puff of wind has been sufficient for the invisible Judge to cause such a tempest and " to shake the foundations of so many buildings," what will it be when he shall come in person ?

* * * * *

But Gregory was not a man to do nothing but groan over his elevation to the Papacy. Home-sickness for the monastery and for a contemplative life were always to exert a powerful influence over him, but they never paralyzed his energies. From the first day of his pontificate he showed himself to be an energetic and decided potentate. He even began at once with a master stroke.

The Archdeacon was the most conspicuous of the clergy in Rome, and a bit of ancient chronicle tells us the following about him :[6] " In the seventh year of the consulate of Mauricius Augustus (the emperor), Laurentius, the first in the order of deacons of the apostolic See, was deposed on

account of his pride and misdeeds, about which we think it our duty to keep silence. Honoratus was thereupon made archdeacon, in the presence of all the priests, deacons, notaries, sub-deacons, and the entire clergy in the *basilica aurea* of the Lateran."

To depose the Archdeacon of the Roman Church and with this publicity was to begin with an example well calculated to inform the clergy of Rome that the new Pope would tolerate no laxity of life.

A decree of the Roman council of 595 (July 5) was perhaps connected with this sensational punishment of the Archdeacon Laurentius. At all events, it was inspired by a desire to bring back the deacons to the essential object of their ministry, which was to preach and to care for the poor. In this Saint Gregory declares: "Into the holy Roman Church, at the head of which the divine dispensation has wished me to be placed, a very reprehensible custom has, for a long time, made its way. Certain persons are called to the ministry of the holy altar with the title of singers (*cantores*), and thus it is seen that nothing is thought of in the order of the diaconate but the training of the voices of the deacons, who should be attending to the business of preaching and the giving of alms. It very often happens that for this sacred ministry beautiful voices are sought for, but that no attention is paid to the candidate's worthy life, and that the singer offends God by his

morals, while he pleases the public by his voice. Therefore, by the present decree, I order that, in this See, the ministers of the sacred altar are not to sing, and that they shall have for their only duty to read the Gospel lesson in the solemnities of the mass (*inter missarum solemnia*). The psalms and other lessons I reserve for the sub-deacons, or, if necessary to the minor orders. If anyone seeks to neglect this command, let him be anathema!"[7]

What the office of preaching (*prædicationis officium*) belonging to the deacons could be, remains obscure for us. On the contrary, the service of distributing alms belonged to the jurisdiction of the deaconries of the seven ecclesiastical departments of Rome, and was a work which the poverty of the people of Rome rendered heavier every day.

John the Deacon has on this point a bit of information which seems to be genuine. He says that he saw in the bookcase (*scrinium*) of the Lateran palace a register, made in the time of Saint Gregory, in which figured the names of persons of every age, sex, and profession, both in Rome and in the neighbouring cities—even "distant maritime cities"—with an indication of the amount allowed them by the Pope and the date of payments on account (II, 30). This care for order need not surprise us in Gregory, and such care was not even new in the Lateran. The same John the Deacon (II, 24) mentions the *Polypticus*, or record of the revenues of the patrimony of

Saint Peter; and he informs us that this *Polypticus* had been drawn up by Pope Gelasius, "in whose footsteps Gregory showed himself very eager to follow."

A reform testifying to the same determination to organize order in the Church was the creation by Gregory of the function of the *vice-dominus*. In 544, the Pope Vigilius, on leaving for Constantinople, where he was to reside for eight years, had confided the Roman clergy to Valentinus, bishop of Santa Rufina, and the care of the Lateran to Ampliatus, a priest honoured with the title of *vice-dominus*.[8] Gregory wished to have beside him a permanent *vice-dominus*, just as in the monasteries the abbot had an overseer (*præpositus*) to whom he could resign the care of secular affairs and of the personnel of the papal establishment. He thus intrusted the Lateran to the deacon Anatolius. "We have," he writes, "appointed him *vice-dominus* and have given over to him the supreme administration of the *episcopium*."[9] This was the name which in the seventh century was given to the palace of the Pope at the Lateran, the name of *patriarchium* appearing only at the end of the seventh century and *palatium* only in the ninth.

This Vidame (or representative of the bishop's temporal affairs) was to be thenceforth the first personage in the Lateran, and, in the processions of the Roman Orders, was to ride first after the Pope. His very name of *vice-dominus* sufficiently

revealed the importance of his office. The *vice-dominus* chosen by Gregory was a deacon; and it can be said that with the creation of the *vice-dominus* the rôle, so long held by the Archdeacon of the Roman Church, terminated.

Until that time there had been attached to the service of the Pope young laymen and seculars; "*ad secreta cubiculi servitia laici pueri ac sæculares*"; but one of the decrees of the Roman council of 595 informs us that Gregory decided thereafter to call to this service only clergymen or monks. The bishop also was to have witnesses of his private life, which must be exemplary.

Another reform was consecrated by the same council. The old rule of the Fathers was to be maintained, which forbade the receiving of any fees for ordinations, or for the granting of the *pallium*, or for the sending out of diplomas; nothing was to be accepted, not even that to which the new name of *pastellum* had been given.[10] This rule was absolute. Nevertheless the wise Pontiff added: "If the person who has been ordained wishes spontaneously, and without having been requested or solicited, to give something to some cleric (*cuilibet clerico*) who shall not have asked for anything, we do not forbid it." We see that, even without any suspicion of simony, the custom of feeing, which was common in all ranks of the imperial hierarchy, was in the eyes of Gregory an abuse, which he wished to banish from the Lateran, and that he tried to do it.

It was an established custom to bury the dead in the churches and also to demand as high a price as possible for this privileged burial-place. But Gregory considered this business as a fault (*vitium*), and wrote : " When by the will of God we were elevated to the honour of the episcopate, we absolutely forbade this practice in our Church. It is a shameful usage, which we have not tolerated under any pretext."

The sons of Heth did not wish to receive anything from Abraham for the sepulchre of his wife (Gen. xxiii, 3–16), having scruples about trading over a corpse (though perhaps the exegesis of the passage given by Gregory does too much honour to their delicacy).

" If," continues the Pope, " a pagan had such scruples, how scrupulous ought we to be, who are bishops ! Should we not be ashamed to increase by our demands and discussions about money the grief of families who are in mourning ? "

Note that the honour of being buried in a church was, in Saint Gregory's time, reserved, as a matter of principle, for Christians of irreproachable character, and on this principle he often insists. What he wants especially is that the honour should be gratuitous. " If, however," he writes to the bishop of Cagliari, " you have granted church-burial to someone, whose father, mother, relatives, or heirs *voluntarily* offer a donation for the lighting, we do not forbid you to accept it ; but we do forbid you to solicit or

demand anything whatsoever. That would be to commit a grave misdemeanour against religion, which might cause people to say (God preserve us from such a thing!) that the Church is venal, or that you are glad to hear of the death of parishioners, if you are seen to be trying to extract, no matter by what means, a profit out of their funerals."

* * * * *

The patrimony of Saint Peter was administered like a great private estate. In each country—in Sicily for example—a rector had the general management of it. The lands were administered under the system of long leases or of plantation-holdings. A numerous staff of overseers (*conductores*), subordinates of the rector, saw to the collection, by under-farmers, of the rents, as they came due, either in money or crops. The overseers themselves also cultivated parts of the estate on their own account, and cattle-breeding was their speciality. It is supposed that all this administration was controlled by a central staff at Rome in the office of the *dispensator Ecclesiæ*. We need not go deeply into this great institution of the patrimony, which is so well known;[11] we wish to examine only the spirit with which Gregory inspired it and the rules that he applied to it.

Gregory himself appointed the rector of each patrimony, and selected them all in Rome from the personnel of his sub-deacons, notaries, and defenders (*defensores*).[12] The rector thus appointed

received his instructions when he left for his post, and regularly sent his reports directly to Rome, where they were read by the Pope himself, who replied to them with an attention to minutiæ, which was permeated with a scrupulous care for both justice and mercy. To appreciate this, one should read, for example, his long reply to the sub-deacon Peter, rector of the patrimony of Sicily (J. 1102). Gregory recalls to him the instructions which he gave him on leaving Rome, and the special mandate with which he invested him, to exercise his vigilance over the bishops, clergy, and monks of Sicily. As for the patrimony itself, numerous complaints, he said, had reached Rome from people who claimed to have suffered for ten years from deeds of violence from the Roman Church (*multos a Romana Ecclesia quasdam violentias pertulisse*). The rector was to inquire into this matter, and, if there was proof of an excessive use of power and of exactions committed in the last ten years, just reparations should be made on the spot, so that the plaintiffs need not come to Rome. The rector must correct all that calls for correction; "He will be a true soldier of the blessed apostle Peter, if, in litigation where the interest of the apostle is at stake, he shall defend the truth alone without distinction of persons, even if it were the person of the apostle himself." The Pope continues: "Let the noble laymen (*laici nobiles*) and the governor (*vir gloriosus*) love you for your humility, and not

abhor you on account of your pride (*Precor, pro humilitate te diligant, non pro superbia perhorrescant*). Yet this does not mean that you are to shut your eyes to the injustice of which they may have, to your knowledge, been guilty against the poor. Act in such a way that your humility may not be weakness, nor your authority be severity. Justice must be accompanied by humility, that humility may render justice lovable."

The rector of the patrimony of Sicily, some time after this, despatched to Rome a report about the decisions he had made. "We have delayed replying to you," wrote Gregory to him, in a long and detailed letter (J. 1112), "because we were wholly absorbed in matters connected with the Easter festival; but now we will answer your report point by point." In his replies, Gregory almost always takes the part of the tenants, *rustici nostri*, against the overseers (*conductores*). He wishes, for example, that the rector should carefully verify the weights that serve to weigh the rentals paid in crops. If the rector discovers false weights, he must break them and replace them by new and correct ones, which the predecessor of the present rector was not able to do. "We wish that nothing more than the just weight should be demanded from the tenants of the Church. Peasants who have been wronged must be indemnified; we must not profit by an act of injustice, unless we want violence to be imputed

to us." We can surmise from this that the honesty of the overseers was rather doubtful, and Gregory gives them a piece of his mind: "We do not wish the purse of the Church to be polluted by shameful gains" (*Nos sacculum Ecclesiæ ex lucris turpibus nolumus inquinari*). Gregory's long letter ends with these unanswerable words: "You have heard what I wish; see what you have to do" (*Audisti quod volo, vide quid agas*).

In another letter (J. 1186) to this same rector of the Sicilian patrimony, the richest of the apostolic domains, we see what a good landlord the Pope knows how to be, and on what details the eye of the master rests. He writes: "Cows which have become sterile through age, and bulls which are good for nothing, must be sold, in order that at least the price they bring may be used profitably. The herds of mares, which we are keeping uselessly, I wish to get rid of; we will keep only four hundred foals for breeding. We cannot pay to the herdsmen of these troops sixty *solidi*, when we do not get sixty pennies from their beasts." It is not necessary to be an expert economist to appreciate here Gregory's good sense. We are astonished only that the rearing of animals on such a large scale is not better organized and more remunerative.

The revenues of the patrimony of Saint Peter put a sum of money into the hands of the Pope which served the needs of his Church, especially its charities.

Gregory, who was very liberal with his own patrimony, treats with the same generosity the patrimony of Saint Peter. What a charming letter he writes to the abbot of a monastery of Catania, to chide him for not having told him sooner of his poverty (J. 1888)! "You ought not to be ashamed to speak urgently of your need to him who disposes, not of his own property, but of the property of the poor. Our ministry is that of a steward of the goods of the poor (*dispensator in rebus pauperum*). You are inexcusable to be so modest." Then he informs the abbot that he has inscribed his monastery on the books of the rector of the Sicilian patrimony for an annual stipend of ten *solidi*, which he begs the abbot kindly to accept, not as a gift from Gregory, but as a benediction from Saint Peter.

At Palermo the dedication of an *Oratorium sanctæ Mariæ* in the monastery of the abbot Marinianus was to be celebrated (J. 1124). This monastery was very small, and accordingly Gregory felt himself constrained to contribute to the expenses of the festival. He therefore wrote to the rector of the Sicilian patrimony to distribute to the poor on that occasion ten gold *solidi*, thirty jars of wine, two measures (*orcas*) of oil, twelve sheep, and a hundred chickens, and to charge all these articles to his account.

To the rector of the patrimony of Campania (J. 1107) Gregory wrote the following:

"I pointed out to you at your departure and I

remember that I ordered you at every post-station to take care of the poor, and that, if you should find any poor there, you should write to inform me who they were. Now you have done this only for a very few. I desire you to give to *domna* Pateria, my relative, as soon as you shall have received this order, forty *solidi*[13] and four hundred bushels of wheat; to *domna* Palatina, widow of Urbicus, twenty *solidi* and three hundred bushels of wheat; to *domna* Viviana, widow of Felix, twenty *solidi* and three hundred bushels of wheat. That makes in all eighty *solidi*, and this you will charge to your accounts."

The title of *domna* makes us think that these were women of quality who had fallen into poverty, for Gregory met very many of these unfortunate patrician ladies.[14] We can well believe that the poor of Rome had also their share. A word in a letter from Gregory to Theoktista,[15] sister of the emperor Mauricius, opens to us a glimpse of the organization of the charities of Rome and of the very systematic care which the Pope gave to it. The princess had sent to the Pope for his benefactions thirty gold *libræ* (the libra being worth a little less than twelve hundred gold francs). In thanking her, the Pope informs her that he will use half of this sum to ransom captives from the Lombards and the other half to purchase blankets for the nuns (*ancillæ Dei*) at Rome, "for the winter this year is of exceptional severity and these poor girls suffer terribly from the cold at

night." The Pope will therefore buy for them coverings (*lectisternia*). These nuns were very numerous. According to the list of charities on which they are registered (*juxta notitiam qua dispensantur*), they numbered three thousand, and received eighty libræ annually. "But what is that," he asks, "for such a large number, especially in this city where living is dear (*ubi omnia gravi pretio emuntur*)?"

In those days, the amounts bestowed in almsgiving were usually charged to the budget of a bishop up to a quarter of his revenue, but can that rule be applied to the bishop of Rome, asks Gregory, who has to relieve so many unexpected cases of distress? A letter which he will subsequently write to the empress Constantia reveals to us briefly the Pope's budget. It runs as follows:

"It is twenty-seven years that we have been living in this city (Rome) under the swords of the Lombards. I have no need to describe to you all that this Church has to pay out to them every day in order to be able to exist. In a few words, I will make it clear; just as in the territory of Ravenna the emperor always has with the first army of Italy a paymaster (*sacellarius*) who provides for all expenses, day by day, so in this city of Rome, for every demand made, it is I who am the emperor's paymaster. Yet at the same time the Church has to support its clergy, its monasteries, its poor, the people, and, in addition to all that, has to pay the Lombards."[16]

The Pope's budget is therefore burdened not only with the proper expenses of the Church, but besides these, with the cost of the Republic, the pay of the troops, the provisioning of the population, and the tribute which must be paid to the Lombards. The bishop of Rome plays the part of a banker of the emperor, save that he is never reimbursed for what he advances.

* * * * *

We must not be astonished that Pope Gregory did not build much, even if we do see him so frequently lament over the ruins in the midst of which he lives in Rome itself. His predecessor, Pelagius II, rebuilt the basilica of Saint Laurence outside the walls, as we still see it, with the exception of the regrettable alterations made in the pontificate of Honorius II ; and this basilica of Pelagius II is one of the most beautiful monuments of Roman Christian art, which was imbued at that time with Byzantine influences. What lustre the unknown architect of Saint Laurence could have added to the pontificate of Gregory, if Gregory had employed him ! But we see the Pope only causing some beams to be brought from Bruttium for the basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in order to repair some decaying portions of their framework !

Nevertheless, the *Liber pontificalis* mentions a silver *ciborium* given by Saint Gregory for the altar of Saint Peter and a decoration for the apostle's

tomb for which not less than a hundred pounds of the purest gold was used.[17] But there is nothing so liable to disappear, and to disappear quickly, as such works as these!

This would be all that the *Liber pontificalis* attributes to Gregory, if it did not mention that, in 591 or 592, he proceeded to the dedication of a church in the *Suburra* quarter, which had belonged for many years to the Arian Goths and had been decorated with mosaics paid for by one of their number, Ricimer, consul in 459. We know that this church, which was called the church of Saint Agatha of the Goths, had been reconsecrated to the true faith and was dear to the devotion of Saint Gregory. He reconsecrated also a little church of Saint Severinus, "beside the *domus Merulana* in the III district," which had also been occupied for a long time by followers of the "Arian superstition" (J. 1223).

What Gregory did for the churches of Rome that was really great and lasting, was his preaching sermons in them which we still read.[18]

He thought that to preach was one of the first duties of a bishop, and to preach meant, for him, to deliver a sermon *during the sacred solemnities of the Mass*, and preferably on the Gospel for the day. In 593 he thought he ought to publish a collection of forty sermons on the Gospel which were without any didactic sequence and were presented in the same order in which he had preached them. These forty sermons in more

than two years are not all that Gregory must have delivered in the course of the first years of his episcopate, and all the more must we regret the fact that we have nothing from him during the years that followed. In the letter to Secundinus, bishop of Taormina, which serves as a preface to the collection of these forty homilies on the Gospel, Gregory informs us that his sermons were sometimes dictated and that he had them subsequently read to the assembled people by a notary, when he himself was prevented from doing so by his gastric attacks which left him voiceless. At other times, he delivered them orally and they were taken down in shorthand. But he complains that these stenographic reports were spread abroad before he had had time to revise the text, and he good-naturedly compares this eagerness to possess them to that of famished people who rush to snatch the meats before they have been properly cooked. He sent to Secundinus a copy of these in two volumes (*codices*), and caused one to be deposited in the book-case (*scrinium*) of the holy Roman Church, as an authentic copy to which anyone would be able to refer, in order to be sure of the text.[19]

To the eloquence of Saint Gregory the same words could be applied which he somewhere uses specifically of a vestment : " The tunic is of more use to us than the pallium." In fact, we must not look in the sermons of Gregory for the noble dignity of the homilies of Saint Leo ; but, to make

up for that lack, they possess a freedom, simplicity, and familiarity that Saint Leo does not know. The two styles mutually exclude each other.

Gregory is not afraid to speak to his hearers of his wretched health; he says: "The summer, which is not at all good for my body, has for a long time prevented me from speaking to you about the Gospel. But if my mouth has been silent, do not think that my love has grown cold. And what I am telling you, each one of you knows from experience. It happens sometimes that, even in the midst of the occupations which hinder me, love is glowing in my heart although it cannot show itself in deeds. In the same way, the sun, when concealed by clouds, does not reveal itself to the earth, but it does not on that account cease to shine in the heavens. . . . And now that the opportunity has come again for me to speak to you, your eagerness to hear me fills me with ardour, and I have all the more consolation in addressing you, because I feel that your souls are impatiently waiting for my words" (II, xxxiv, 1).

This exordium alone would give us an idea of Gregory's easy, cordial, and unstudied eloquence. No style of oratory is better adapted to the audience to which it was addressed. Here is an example: "We see, very dear brethren, in what numbers you have come to the festival of the martyr, Saint Pancras. You are here on your knees, you smite your breasts, you repeat aloud words of prayer and confession, while tears roll

down your cheeks. But, I beg you, weigh these petitions of yours and ask yourselves if you are really presenting them in the name of Jesus, I mean, if you are asking for the blessings of salvation. . . . Alas! one is praying for a villa, another for an article of dress, another for something to eat . . . and there perhaps is one who is praying to God for the death of his enemy" (II, xxvii, 7).

Such characteristics, now pleasing, now incisive, but always without bitterness, show us the average Roman of that time, devout, easily affected, violent, and, let us add, sociable. "If any one of you, my brethren, is going to the forum or perhaps to the bath, and meets a friend who is unoccupied, you invite him to go along with you. Let this your daily conduct teach you something and, since you are going to God, try not to go to Him alone. (I, vi, 6). There are still baths at Rome, there is always a forum, and there are always idlers."

In Gregory's sermons there are no lofty flights of dogmatic argument, which would pass over the heads of these good people. The Gospel for the day is first summed up literally; then its meaning is explained, for it often contains a mystery; then, the letter or *historia* of the text often expands into an allegory. It contains also a moral, the application of which must be applied by each hearer to himself. Gregory is fond of laying great stress on this moral lesson, for he desires above all to convert his hearers, and to establish them

in the way of salvation and to give them a perspective of the Invisible. The Saviour said to his apostles: "Go, preach, saying that the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and this is also the method of Gregory.

"This kingdom, my very dear brethren, even if the Gospel should be silent about it, the world itself would proclaim. These very ruins have a voice for its service. Beaten down by so many blows, the ancient kingdom has fallen from its glory and shows us now another kingdom, which is coming, which is already near. The present world is bitter for those who love it, and its decrepitude teaches us that we ought not to love it. If your house, shaken by the tempest, threatened to fall in ruins, you who dwell in it would flee from it. You loved it when it stood strong and erect, but you should hasten to leave it when it begins to crumble. If then, when the world is sinking beneath us, we still love it and cling to it, it is because we wish to perish with it. . . . Yet how easy it is, when we behold the destruction of everything, to detach our souls from the love of the world, and how much easier it is now to do so, than in the time of the apostles whom the Saviour sent forth to preach the invisible kingdom of heaven at a time when they saw all those kingdoms flourishing through the length and breadth of the earth!" (I, iv, 2).

That is the pathetic thing about Saint Gregory; his view was short-sighted certainly, for the world

was not nearing its end, but it was touching because it was the sentiment of a Roman who had loved so many great things, whose decadence he felt to be hopeless. Yet, after all, Gregory knew well that the Christian lives in the present and that the preacher must lead him to the immediate practice of virtue. Gregory was a keen and earnest moralist, who does not care to describe human infirmities but rather to cure them at once. His zeal is expressed in maxims which he disdains to make polished or elegant. He aims only at making them intelligible. They are, however, far from being commonplace and declamatory, and their simplicity and absolute sincerity always give us food for reflection.

"My brothers," he exclaims, "when you do good, remember always what you have previously done that was bad, so that, seriously considering your faults, you may not be too foolishly happy over your good actions. Let all of you endeavour to be great, but also to be ignorant of the fact that you are great, for fear of losing the greatness which you arrogate to yourselves so proudly. . . .

"Goodness is nothing, unless accompanied by humility. . . . In all things, my brothers, recollect that humility is the root of goodness. Fix your gaze, not upon those whom you surpass, but on those who surpass you, so that, while offering yourselves as an example of the best, you can by humility constantly surpass your own past selves" (I, vii, 4).

This kind of moralizing is assuredly the best part of Gregory's eloquence; but another characteristic element must also be mentioned here. Gregory loves to instruct his people by edifying stories. His are the stories of an evangelist. He recounts the terrifying death of the evil rich man, Chrysaorius (for example, I, xii, 7), or the comforting death of Servulus, "whom I and many of you have known," and who lived "in the portico through which the people pass when going to the church of Saint Clement" (I, xv, 5).

Many of these are miracles (*mirabilia*), which do not astonish his auditors, who like this familiar treatment of the supernatural, and Gregory is even more fond of it than they, as can be plainly seen in his *Dialogues*.

The forty sermons on the Gospel which we have from Gregory were delivered in the churches whose names were inscribed upon them. Nine were preached in the basilica of Saint Peter, one in the basilica of Saint Paul, six in the basilica of Saint John Lateran, "*which is called Constantiniana*," two in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, one in the basilica of Saint Andrew (built by Pope Symmachus and adjoining Saint Peter's), one in the basilica of the Holy Apostles Philip and James, one in Saint Stephen's (on the Cœlian), two in Saint Clement's, one in Saints Nereus and Achilleus, one in Saints Peter and Marcellinus (*in Merulana*), one in Saints John and Paul (on the

Cœlian), one in Saint Silvester's (a church rebuilt by Pope Symmachus under the added name of our Saint Martin, to-day Saint Martin of the Mounts); then, outside the walls, one in Saint Sebastian's, four at Saint Lawrence's, two at Saint Agnes', one in Saint Felicitas (Via Salaria), one in Saint Felix (Via Aurelia), one at the church of Saint Pancras (Via Aurelia), one in Saints Processus and Martinianus (Via Aurelia), one in Saint Mennas (Via Ostiensis). These make thirty-nine in all, for sermon XVII must be reckoned separately, as it was preached before an assembly of bishops at the Lateran.

Sermon VIII, delivered in the basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is intended for Christmas. He says: "We cannot speak to you a long time at present on the Gospel which has just been read, because through our Lord's favour we shall celebrate the holy Mass three times to-day" (VIII, 1). Homily XXI, preached in the same basilica, is designed for Easter, as is No. X, preached at Saint Peter's for Epiphany. No. XXX, also at Saint Peter's, is written for Pentecost.

Septuagesima brings us to Saint Lawrence's (XIX); Sexagesima to Saint Paul's (XV); Quinquagesima to Saint Peter's (II); the first Sunday in Lent to Saint John Lateran (XVI). The Pope preaches during Easter week and again on the Sunday of the Octave of Easter. There are also Sundays in Advent, Sundays in Lent, Sundays after Easter, and days of Ember Week. Finally, it

is the same for the feasts of the Saints, their birthdays; for example, for Saint Andrew, Saints Nereus and Achilleus, Saint Felicitas, Saint Silvester, Saint Agnes, and Saint Sebastian. Sometimes the distance to the churches is long and the road wearisome. The day when Gregory preached at Saint Mennas, he said to the congregation: "As we are very far from the city, and as I do not want to return home too late, I must make my sermon short. . . . This summer has been drenched with wintry rains" (XXXV, 1).

We have no sermon from him on the birthdays of Saints Peter and Paul, which inspired Saint Leo to such magnificent eloquence. The Acts of the martyrs, whose nativity he celebrates, are sources of information which he does not neglect, as is proved by the use he makes of the Acts of Saint Felicitas (III), but such documents are rare, and it is of the Gospel for the day above all that he speaks to his auditors. The homilies on the Gospel do not belie the title which he gave them, and they deserve the fate which they have had—that of becoming models of pastoral eloquence and liturgical preaching, and "one of the most widely read and most venerated books of the whole Middle Ages."[20]

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The story of Saint Gregory's accession to the papal throne and of his first acts as Pontiff assumes its whole significance, only when it is visualized

in the tragic condition which the Lombards were then creating for Rome and for everything which was still dependent on the king. The letter of Pope Pelagius II, written on October 4, 584, appealing to the emperor Mauricius for help and describing to him (and with what emotion !) the peril of Rome, might have been written again by his successor Gregory. The Exarch Smaragdus had obtained from the Lombards, in 586, a truce, but his successor, Romanus, in 589, did not wish to renew it. The emperor could not then undertake in Italy an operation of great magnitude, but at the same time he obstinately refused to negotiate, through fear of wholly abandoning what he had lost. Rome was besieged by Ariulf, Lombard duke of Spoleto, while Arogis, Lombard duke of Beneventum (Brindisi) was menacing Naples. The Exarch, however, remained safe and cautious in Ravenna. Gregory wrote to John, the bishop of Ravenna (July, 592), as follows: "If I have made no answer to the many letters of your beatitude, do not attribute it to my laziness, but to my physical exhaustion; because, as punishment for my sins, at the very moment when Ariulf was killing and beheading at the gates of Rome, I was seized with such a fit of melancholy that I fell into a bilious fever. I was astonished that the well-known solicitude of your holiness could do nothing for this city (Rome) and for my needs. Your letters have informed me that you were acting zealously, but that you had

no one whom you could prevail upon to act. It is to my sins that I attribute the fact that he whom this affair most concerns not only refuses to fight against our enemies but actually forbids us to make peace " (J. 1198).

These words are aimed at the Exarch of Ravenna, the patrician Romanus, and denounce his weak and infatuated policy, that of neither war nor peace. Gregory would like to have at least an armistice, and he implores the bishop of Ravenna to suggest to the Exarch the wisdom of treating with Ariulf, " because, as the Exarch well knows, the garrison has been withdrawn from the city of Rome and the *Theodosiaci*,[21] who have remained here, are scarcely willing to mount guard on the walls, having failed to receive their pay. How will Rome, destitute of everything, be able to exist, if it does not obtain peace ? " The Exarch should at least let Gregory negotiate with Ariulf and obtain from him acceptable conditions, even if it be necessary to include in them a good price (J. 1198).

Meantime, however, Gregory looked after the defence of Rome and tried to give it a little breathing space. He addressed himself to the commanders (*magistri militum*), who, it seems, received from no one authority to act, and who turned towards Gregory, as towards a chief. He wrote to one of them, Velox, who was from Perugia, to send some soldiers to Rome and to admonish them that they should be prepared to work (" *Ut*

parati sint ad laborem"), and also that he should form a plan with two other commanders, Maurilius and Vitalianus, and to do, together, all that they possibly can for the good of the republic ("*pro utilitate reipublicæ*"). If Velox should surprise some movement on the part of Ariulf in the direction of Ravenna or Rome, they should fall upon his rear and like strong men, make a good job of it ("*sicut decet viros fortes laborate*").[22] On receiving the news that Ariulf was marching on Rome, where he had promised himself to shed some blood in celebration of the birthday of Saint Peter, Gregory wrote to Maurilius and Vitalianus that they should do their utmost at least to cut off all chance of his retreat.[23]

He himself gives to Naples Constantius as military governor ("*Constantium tribunum custodiæ civitatis deputavimus præesse*"), and writes to the garrison to recognize him and obey him, reminding them that "obedience for an army is of all merits worthy of the highest praise, especially obedience to the Republic."[24] He also sends Leontius to Nepi, and writes to the clergy, to the Orders of the Church, and to the people of Nepi that he has confided to this *vir clarissimus* the defence of their city and the responsibility for the interests of the Republic.[25] As a bishop, he could confine his mission to the churches and to the care of souls, but he goes beyond his mission, as a Roman devoted to what the old name of Republic contains for him of the past, of order, of legitimacy, and of

civilization. He encroaches thus, it is true, on the power of the Exarch, but the Exarch is a weakling, and the public safety justifies this self-assumed dictatorship of the bishop of Rome.

Rome did not, however, fall this time into the hands of Ariulf, duke of Spoleto, who suddenly withdrew his forces.[26] But in the following year the Lombards reappeared (593) and at their head their king Agilulf. Never had the peril been so great.

In Gregory's sermons on Ezechiel there is a description of the desolation of Rome which is of exactly the same date as this attack of Agilulf. In this he said:

"Where now are those who exulted with joy over the glory of Rome? Where are their trains of attendants (*eorum pompa*)? Where is their pride? . . . Where, asked the prophet Nahum, is the dwelling of the lions and the feeding-place of the young lions? Were not Rome's dukes and princes lions, who scoured the provinces of the world and seized upon their prey by violence and murder? It is here that the young lions had their feeding-place, for hither children, youth, young worldlings and the sons of worldlings, hastened from all parts of the world when they wanted to make their fortunes. . . . Ah! No one any longer hastens hither to make his fortune. . . . The prophet Micheas said: 'Enlarge thy baldness like the eagle.' Man has only his head that is bald; but the eagle becomes bald all over its

body, and when it grows old it loses all its feathers, including those of its wings" (*Homily on Ezechiel*, VII, 22–23). This comparison of degenerate Rome to an eagle, old, bald, and deplumed, is worthy of Shakespeare. But the hour is critical, Rome is besieged. The anxiety is such that Gregory had to interrupt the sermons which he was preaching on Ezechiel. The people were daily expecting an assault which would make of Rome a Lombard city and, who knows? perhaps the capital of the Lombards.

Nevertheless, King Agilulf did not take Rome any more than the duke of Spoleto had done. The surprise in Italy must have been great to learn that, in this total failure of the Exarch, the Pope had taken upon himself to treat personally with the king of the Lombards on behalf of Rome; but the record is preserved, established by Paul the Deacon (*Life of Gregory*, 26) that Gregory went out to meet the Lombard king, as formerly Saint Leo had gone to meet Attila, and that he by his attitude and words obtained the concession that Rome should be saved. This fact is also confirmed by a chronicle dating from about the year 649, in which it is said that the king of the Lombards, when besieging Rome with all his forces, met Gregory, and that "overcome by the prayers, the wisdom, and the religious seriousness of so great a man, gave up the siege of the city." The picture is a fine one, but it is not complete, for from the same source we learn that the Romans

agreed to pay to the Lombards annually a tribute of five hundred libræ of gold (*quinque centenaria*). Gregory established peace by purchasing it, but he owed the peace as much to his own prestige as bishop of the apostolic See, as to the promised tribute, and it is not a matter of no importance that the Pope and king met on the steps of the basilica of Saint Peter's, "*ad gradus basilicæ beati apostoli Petri apostolorum principis.*"[27]

The events which we have just recalled occurred within a space of four years, between 590 and 593, that is to say, in the first four years of the pontificate of Gregory. In them he figured not only as a bishop, but also as a reforming bishop, an eloquent bishop, and a magistrate who considered himself responsible—before the Republic and in spite of her—for the defence of Rome. He writes:

"We cannot tell you what we have to suffer from your friend Romanus. I will say briefly, that his wickedness towards us is worse than that of the Lombards; the enemies who are massacring us actually seem kinder than the judges of the Republic, who devour us by their evil deeds, their extortions, and their duplicity. I must care at the same time for my bishops, clergy, monasteries, and people, and I have the distress of being always on my guard against the preparations of the Lombards and must also be on the watch against the rascalities and evil designs of my functionaries. What my task and what my sufferings must be, your brotherly heart can estimate the more

truthfully because you love piously the man who has to endure all this."[28]

But Gregory had not yet finished with either the Lombards or the people of Byzantium!

[1] J. 1073, October 590.
[2] J. 1111, April 591.
[3] J. 1069, September 590.
[4] J. 1068, the same time.
[5] Homily on Gospel I, 1.
[6] P.L. LXXVII, 1329.
[7] It is not impossible that this exclusion of the deacons from the service of singers, was completed by the organization of a *Schola cantorum*. John the Deacon (II, 6) knows of an act of donation by Gregory to the institution which later bore his name. Schubert, 199. But I should like to have a better guarantor for this than John the Deacon. P. Batiffol, *Histoire du Bréviaire Romain* (1911), 64–67.
[8] *Liber pontif.*, I, 297.
[9] J. 1078, December 590.
[10] "Necque ex datione pallii, neque ex traditione chartarum, neque ex ea quam nova per ambitionem simulatio invenit appellatione pastelli." The *pallium* is meant. The *traditio chartarum* is the act of delivering to a person who has been ordained a letter attesting his ordination, as Gregory says a few lines later: "Confirmationis ejus epistulam notarius scribit." The *pastellum* is a distribution of provisions.
[11] P. Fabre and L. Duchesne, *Le Liber censuum de l'Eglise romaine*, 1899 *et seq.* A comparison is made between the patrimony of Saint Peter and the domain of the emperor. Cf. C. Jullian, *Hist. de la Gaule*, VIII, (1926), 48–50.
[12] Before going to their posts, they took an oath. Gregory writes to the notary Pantaleon in Sicily: "Experientia tua quod vel quale apud sacratissimum corpus beati Petri apostoli jusjurandum præbuerit memor est" (J. 1804).

[13] The text reads : " Offeras ad calciarium puerorum (the upkeep of children) solidos quadraginta." Compare the letter to Libertinus, *exprætor* of Sicily, whom Gregory tries to console for his disgrace and to whom he sends " viginti vestitus ad pueros vestros " (J. 1780).

[14] The alms of the Pope were sometimes solicited from a great distance. See the gracious letter which Gregory wrote to the abbot of a monastery in Isauria, in Asia Minor, who had asked of him a manuscript of the Gospels and fifty *solidi* (J. 1350).

[15] J. 1469, June 597.

[16] J. 1352, June 1, 595.

[17] *Lib. pontif.*, I, 313, note 8.

[18] On the authority of John the Deacon (II, 18) it is repeatedly said that Gregory ordered stations for basilicas or cemeteries of the blessed martyrs (" stationes per basilicas vel beatorum martyrum cœmeteria." The *Comes* of Würzburg (seventh century), in which are mentioned all the Roman stations, may represent the contemporary usage of Gregory. As to the institution of the stations (either pertaining to that time or to the feasts of martyrs) it is anterior to Pope Hilarus (461–468). See *Lib. pontif.*, I, 246. In principle it can go back to the third century, as P. Kirsch has shown, *Die Stationskirchen* (1926). As to the attribution to Saint Gregory of the " Gregorian chant," see R. van Doren, *Etude sur l'influence musicale de l'abbaye de Saint Gall* (1925). C. Callewaert (" De origine cantus gregoriani," *Ephemerides liturgicæ*, 1926, 97 and 161) endeavours to reply to the objections of Dom van Doren. For the retouches given by Gregory to the ordinary of the Mass, see P. Batiffol, *Leçons sur la messe*, 1927, 229, 277, 281. On the part of Gregory in the establishment of the " Gregorian Sacramentary," see the observations of E. Bishop, *The Genius of the Roman Rite*, translated by Wilmart (1920), 52–54. The eight hymns attributed to Gregory have no authenticity.

[19] See G. Pfeilschifter, " Die authentische Ausgabe der Evangelien-Homilien des Gregors des G." in the *Veröffentlichungen*, I, (1900) of the seminary of ecclesiastical history of Knöpfler, at Munich.

[20] J. de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XII siècle* (1914), 15.

[21] *Theodosiaci*, a legion bearing the name of the eldest son of the emperor Mauricius. Ewald, I, 145.

[22] J. 1152, September 27, 591.

[23] J. 1187, July 592.

[24] J. 1189. Same time.

[25] J. 1166, January 592.

[26] Between the retreat of the duke of Spoleto and the appearance of Agilulf before Rome, historians place a successful demonstration of the Exarch Romanus and his coming to Rome, of which the *Liber pontificalis* speaks, Duchesne, I, 312. Duchesne, however, prefers to place this intervention by the Exarch in the first months of Gregory's pontificate.

[27] *Chronica minora*, ed. Mommsen, I (1892), 339.

[28] J. 1535, June 1, 595, to Sebastian, bishop of Risano.

CHAPTER IV

THE "REGULA PASTORALIS" AND THE "MORALIA"

WE have just seen Saint Gregory in the exercise of his function as bishop of Rome. For, although made a bishop against his will, he resigned himself to the fact and took up his heavy task with firm and unfettered hands. Accordingly he reformed, administered, preached, and . . . waged war! It might be supposed that this would be enough for the activity of a man continually an invalid, but how far from knowing him whoever thought so would be!

In addition to all else, Gregory had still another and very different side to his character. He was in the first place a *writer*, and, in saying that, I am not thinking merely of some 850 letters of his, which we possess,[1] but more particularly of his book for bishops, the *Regula Pastoralis*.

For Gregory, the writer, was also a bishop, and the bishop of the apostolic See, and he was thoroughly imbued with the thought that the Church needs saints and zealous bishops. The Popes have always examined carefully the choice of those upon whom the episcopal elections fall in their metropolitan jurisdiction, and have given

to the entire Occident strict rules on this subject. But they have always had to reckon first, with the traditional custom that the bishop elected must be taken from that locality; secondly, with the fact that deacons, priests, and bishops are instructed and prepared, at least in the small churches, God only knows how; and, finally, with the necessity of taking into consideration the state of morals and the public calamities of the time. To raise the episcopate to the height of its great ministry, to make of the bishops the conscience of their people, and to forewarn these pastors of the weaknesses which assail them was, as Gregory well knew, an urgent work which concerned the whole Church. He was therefore eager to undertake it.

If we read the sermon preached in consistory at the Lateran (*Homil. in Evang.*, XVII), we can judge with what zeal Gregory threw himself into this work, and with what severity he dared to address the bishops. He says, for example: "How many of them there are who, as soon as they are invested with their power to rule, desire nothing more than to torment their subjects, to inspire in them a terror of their authority, and to injure those to whom they ought to be useful! And because they have no charity in their hearts, they wish to play the rôle of *domini* and forget entirely that they are spiritual fathers. They make of their See, which is intended for the house of humility, a haughty despotism."

But it is not enough for the Church to have tyrannical bishops, there are also bishops who are guilty of simony. This evil is not a new one, and ever since the fourth century, when it made its appearance in the Orient, it has been an open wound. Gregory means to put the knife into it.

"It is to you, bishops, that I speak—groaning also as I speak—because there are among you some who, we know, make money out of their ordinations, who sell the spiritual grace, and who gain the filthy lucre of this world from the iniquity of others, while they themselves are not without sin. Yet, did not the Saviour say: '*Freely you have received; freely give?*' And did not the Saviour drive out the traders from the Temple? Who are those who to-day are selling doves in the temple of God, if not those who in the church lay on their episcopal hands in ordination in return for money? That is the simony which the holy canons condemn, and for which the canons prescribe that those who seek to make money by the ordinations they confer shall be deprived of the episcopate."

"Another evil in the lives of bishops," continues Saint Gregory, "afflicts me sorely, and I accuse myself of it, although I am constrained thereto by the necessity of these barbarous times (*barbarici temporis necessitate*). We are involved in a thousand temporal affairs, engrossed with worldly cares, and indifferent to the desire for heaven (*cæleste desiderium*) and are fond of human glory." No

doubt in an age when the bishop seems to have been the only authority that still existed in the city, he was obliged to watch over all its interests and all its public duties: "*Ecce jam pene nulla est sæculi actio quam non sacerdotes administrent.*" "But," exclaims Gregory, "are we, for all that, going to forget that we are the salt of the earth, and that our people expect from us before everything else the salvation of souls? What assurance shall we have of our own salvation, if we present ourselves before the supreme Judge, as shepherds without flocks?"

We see how severe the probing of the conscience, which Gregory sets before his bishops, is. But he does not stop there. He will write a little book, designed, not so much to expose their faults, as to train their consciences; and this little book will have so great a success and such efficacious authority, that it can be truly said to have been the standard rule of the Western episcopate.

* * * * *

The *Liber regulæ pastoralis* is addressed to John the bishop (of Ravenna).[2] Gregory finds a pretext for it in the letter which John had written him, in which, with a sentiment of veneration and affection, he had gently reproached Gregory for having wished by flight to escape the burden of the episcopate. "My very dear brother," writes Gregory in reply, "it is indeed a burden, and, for fear that it may seem a light one to certain souls,

I wish to consecrate this book to a declaration of what I think of that burden's weight, in order that those on whom it has not fallen may not seek it thoughtlessly, and that those who have sought it thoughtlessly may tremble at having obtained it."

An art cannot be improvised. What temerity, therefore, to assume without preparation the pastoral mastership of souls, for the government of souls is the supreme art ("*ars est artium regimen animarum*"). But ambition is not afraid of using such temerity. To-day, through the grace of God, all that there is of earthly grandeur, however lofty, bows respectfully before religion, and accordingly we see men seeking in the Church, not merely power, but also honours and glory. Such men reign, therefore, without having been really called to their positions by God; hence, urged on, as they have been, by their cupidity only, they may be said to have seized upon the episcopate, rather than to have received it.

Gregory is, however, equally severe on one who declines the episcopate to which God has called him. He pictures to himself a Christian richly endowed with divine gifts, chaste, self-controlled, well instructed, patient, humble, courageous, and just, and he does not recognize in such a Christian the right to refuse to become a bishop.

Anyone who refuses to feed the flock of God, even if it be on account of his attachment to the contemplative life, is proved to be guilty of not

loving the supreme Bishop. Humility is not genuine, when it resists the designs of God. Let him obey, therefore, however disagreeable it may be, and let him be reassured by thinking that he has not sought glory in the honour of being bishop, and that he is not one of those who, "aspiring to the summit of power, secretly gloat in advance over the subjection of others, rejoice in the praise they will receive, yearn for honours, exult in the wealth which will flow into their coffers, and seek secular gains in an elevated office which ought to stand for the condemnation of worldly advantages."

Gregory insists on the unworthiness of these ambitious men and on the intentions which they are deluded enough to believe pure; they lie to themselves, they pretend to love what they do not love and not to love what they love. They wanted to arrive at their goal, i.e. to rule (*principari*), and they were pining with impatience at not arriving; but having arrived, what insolence is theirs! They are persuaded that their elevation was due to themselves. They enjoy their new dignity like people of the world. They forget all the pious purposes they may once have had. No! he who was always puffed up when he was nothing, can never learn humility, when he has reached the summit; such a man will not avoid the praise of others, and will never overcome the vice of avarice.

The true bishop is one who, dead to all carnal passions, lives spiritually, disdains the riches of

the world, fears no adversity, and desires only spiritual blessings. He gives liberally of what he possesses, and does not envy the possessions of others. His compassion inclines him to pardon, but he does not yield to the weakness of pardoning more than should be forgiven, for he refuses to swerve from the path of justice. He wishes to be in everything and to all men, worthy of imitation and to have the privilege of being heard by God in prayer. Gregory here makes a comparison which resembles a parable: "If," he says, "by chance someone comes to us and, in order that we may intercede in his favour, wishes to conduct us to some potentate of the world, whose anger he dreads but who is unknown to us, we reply to him without hesitation: 'We cannot intercede in your favour, because we do not know this personage.' If, then, a man excuses himself for not being able to intercede thus with a human being, how will he, who knows that he is not in a state of grace on account of the meagre merits of his life, dare to intercede with God? How can he beg God for the forgiveness of others, when he does not know whether God has not some cause of resentment against him? Let the bishop, who is still attached to the love of this world, fear to excite the anger of the divine Judge, and let him not cause the ruin of his flock by taking delight in the splendour of his ecclesiastical dignity."

Let us not expect from Gregory a studied literary composition. Repetitions, prolixity, and

carelessness in writing do not frighten him; in his style he is exuberant and no purist; he lets his conscience and experience speak and is not concerned about speaking well himself. It is impossible to analyse point by point a treatise, which can hardly be called a treatise; but it is possible to overlook the commonplaces of a passage, and to note the observations which reveal the author and his time.

A bishop, Gregory says, ought to practise silence, but his silence must not be without discrimination. There are bishops who fear to say boldly the right things (*loqui libere recta*), because they are afraid of losing the favour of men. Such men are hirelings. For the defence of his flock, the bishop ought to hold his ground and speak out manfully to the powers of this world. But he should also give proof of his mercy. "Let him make himself known as one, to whom his people will not be ashamed to reveal the secrets of their hearts, and to whom these little ones, when they are struggling with the waves of temptations, may come, as to the bosom of a mother, for the counsel of their pastor." He will comfort them by his exhortations and "they will wash away their faults with the tears of prayer." Truly a fine text (II, 5), which casts a vivid light on the penitential office of the bishop,[3] to whom his people open their consciences and from whom they expect aid in their troubled thoughts. This passage ends with the following touching remark: "It often happens

that when the bishop becomes acquainted thus with the trials of others and sympathizes with them, he feels within himself something of the temptations thus revealed to him. . . . But let not the pastor fear, because God weighs everything very accurately and will preserve him from temptation the more easily, because he has borne the weight of the temptation of others with pity." Pity, however, is not everything. "It is necessary that bishops should be also feared by their people, when these bishops find out that members of their flock do not fear God, but hesitate to sin only through fear of men and do not dread the judgements of God" (II, 6). Why do we see bishops failing in this duty? Gregory prefers, however, to remind them that they ought to serve, rather than to rule: "*Nec præesse se hominibus gaudent, sed prodesse*" (II, 6). They should recollect the example of Saint Peter, "who received from God the primacy (*principatus*) of the holy Church," yet refused the marks of veneration which the centurion Cornelius wished to give him: "No, no," he said, "I am only a man like yourself." Nevertheless it was this same Peter who showed such sovereign authority, in regard to the sin of Ananias and Saphira! The bishop will learn from this that he must oppose vices rather than brethren (*vitiis potius quam fratribus dominatur*).

By virtue of his power he will punish faults, and at the same time by his humility he will show

himself to be on an equality with the brothers whom he corrects; although (Saint Gregory touchingly adds) "it would be just, in most cases, that we should silently consider those whom we correct as better than ourselves." "Let us," he says, "reconcile humility and discipline; the bishop is both father and mother; like the good Samaritan, he gives to the wounded oil and wine, gentleness and severity; not too much gentleness, not too much severity, but a love that is not weakening, a vigour that is not exasperating, a pity that spares only what ought to be spared, a zeal which will not, by its excesses, provoke terror. One sometimes meets bishops who forget that they are consecrated to the saving of souls, and devote themselves entirely to secular tasks. Day and night, they think only of these and are greatly agitated by them. They actually find pleasure in being overwhelmed by business affairs, and while they congratulate themselves on being driven along by the tumult of the world, they become strangers to the spiritual things which they ought to be teaching to others. By this conduct, the spiritual life of their flock is compromised, for when the head is feeble, the members are sluggish. One may undertake secular affairs through compassion, but one ought never to go in quest of them through inclination. This does not mean that we should praise the bishop who refuses to be a second Providence for his people. Has not Saint Paul, speaking of pastoral care, said: "If

any man have not care of his own and especially of those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel"? Let us preserve, therefore, an even balance between outward activity and inward contemplation. "Too frequently, in order to devote themselves unreservedly to temporal cares, the bishops let the love, which they ought to cherish in their inmost hearts, grow cold."

Let them also beware of the desire to please, and let them not seek to make *themselves* loved more than the truth. And here again occurs a comparison which could be regarded as a parable. He says: "Whoever, in doing good, desires to be loved by the Church, instead of by the Redeemer himself, is an enemy of the Redeemer, as the servant who wishes to charm the wife, to whom he brings the presents of her husband, commits adultery in his thoughts" (II, 8). This does not mean that the bishop ought not to make himself loved by his people, but that he should do so only in order to make the *truth* loved. For it is difficult for a preacher, however edifying his sermon may be, to make his hearers listen to him gladly, if he is not loved by them. Let him, therefore, make himself loved, that he may thus attract hearers, but let him not monopolize for *himself* the love they have for him. Saint Paul said: "I desire in all things to please all men"; but he said likewise: "If I still pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." The apostle

therefore pleases and yet does not please, because in seeking to please, he is not seeking anything for himself, but wishes that through him the truth may be acceptable to his people.

"The bishop," Gregory continues, "will prove adequate to his task, if, inspired from on high by the spirit of love and fear, he endeavours to meditate every day on the precepts of the Holy Scriptures, so that those divine admonitions may revive in him a zeal for the care of his flock and a love of the heavenly life; and whoever through association with worldly people is in danger of seeing his spiritual life grow feeble, must rejuvenate it by contrition and a loving desire for the heavenly country" (II, 11).

A third part of the *Regula pastoralis* has for its aim to show how a bishop should teach. Saint Augustine had written on this subject his admirable little book "*De catechizandis rudibus*," which Gregory by no means equals. Nor had he any idea of improving on it. He thinks that the preacher ought to cultivate a great diversity of style from the fact that he is addressing people who are themselves very different. What is good for one is not suitable for another. "A man whistles gently, both to quiet a horse and to excite a young dog." The speaker ought, therefore, to adapt himself to the characters of his hearers; their minds are like the tightened strings of the cithara, which give to the artist the notes he wants provided—even while using the same plectrum—

he does not strike them with the same force. Then there follows a long description of the characteristics and customs of the Christian public which, we must confess, is not particularly interesting, for it is chiefly made up of elementary generalities. For example: "One must preach differently to masters and slaves. Slaves should consider their lowly condition, but let masters remember that they were created just as their slaves were and, in respect to natural origin, are on the same level. Slaves should be exhorted not to despise their masters, lest they offend God by resisting, through pride, a social order established by Him; and masters should be warned that they will, pluming themselves on the very blessings God has given them, become puffed up with pride against Him, if they do not recognize as their equals, in the human nature common to them alike, those whom circumstances have made their slaves. These bondsmen should know that they are the slaves of their masters, but masters also should bear in mind that they are the companions (*conservi*) of their slaves in servitude" (III, 5).

It would, however, be unjust to Gregory not to point out in this passage more than one valuable observation. The chapters on patience (III, 9) and on the revenge which patience, having become embittered, seeks to take, is the work of a moralist, who has a knowledge of psychology and much spontaneous wit. Elsewhere he speaks with a kind and indulgent humour of those who praise

good people, but are not anxious to imitate them. "The holiness of virtue pleases them," he says, "just as the vanity of theatrical performances pleases the spectators. These certainly applaud the feats of the charioteers and comedians, yet they have no desire to perform those feats themselves" (III, 10). We mention especially the chapters on the sick (III, 12) and on the rich who make a bad use of their wealth (III, 20). Gregory knows some such people who "do not hesitate to give generously for the support of actors, while the poor of Christ are suffering the pangs of hunger." He knows others, too, who "redeem their past sins by alms-giving and continue to commit sins which they intend also to redeem, on the theory that the justice of God is purchasable, and that, if they give silver pieces enough, they can go on sinning with impunity."

To be a good moralist, one must be an observer, and Gregory is an attentive, though a charitable, observer. There is nothing, even to animals, that he does not know how to study, and he describes somewhere the crowing and other actions of a cock (III, 39 and 40) with a precision that would have delighted the good-natured La Fontaine.

The last part of the *Regula pastoralis* is only a conclusion. The preacher, the author says, will be tempted to enjoy the secret satisfaction of having spoken well. Here, therefore, is a point where he must be on his guard. That cunning tempter, the devil, will take advantage of his lukewarmness

to remind him of all the good works he has done and to swell his soul with pride. Let us beware of the enumeration of our virtues, for they are capable of inspiring us with false hopes.

Finally, Saint Gregory ends by a return to self-examination. He writes: "I have desired to show what a true pastor should be and I have painted an ideal portrait of one, but I am myself a miserable painter and I direct others to the shore of perfection, while I am still tossed about at sea by the waves of sin. Ah, good reader, let your prayers—a veritable plank of salvation—support me in the shipwreck of this life!"

The *Liber regulæ pastoralis*, distributed freely by Gregory,[4] was welcomed with gratitude by the episcopate of that time, if we can judge from the letter which Licinianus, bishop of Carthagena, wrote about it to Gregory.[5] In fact, the *Liber* was soon widely circulated and reached even Spain, where it was read with avidity. "Who would not read with consolation," he asks, "a book which, if meditated on perseveringly, is a medicine for the soul, and which, by inspiring contempt for the decrepit, fluctuating, and ever changing things of this world, opens the eyes of the mind to the stability of the life eternal? Thy book is a school for all virtues (*Liber hic tuus omnium est aula virtutum*)." We see that Licinianus had not been offended by the rough and ready frankness of the Pope's style. On the contrary, he has recognized in it the teaching of

the holy doctors and defenders of the Church, like Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory of Nazianzum. He fears only that the virtues which Gregory requires from the bishops may discourage vocations. "You command that an inexperienced man shall not be ordained" (*Jubes ut non ordinetur imperitus*), he writes to Gregory, and he fears that under such a condition, there will be found no more bishops. But this apprehension was not of a kind to disturb Gregory. Licinianus was, however, none the less attached to the author on that account, and writes: "We are thine, and we are delighted to read thy words" (*Tui sumus, tua legere delectamur*). And he was certainly not the only one in the episcopate to think so.

* * * * *

Saint Gregory had a profound reverence for the Holy Scriptures. He loved to preach on the Gospel, as we have seen, and to draw from it lessons which he deemed necessary for his people. He was attracted also by the most difficult problems of exegesis, that is, the problems of interpretation which certain books present, the literal meaning of which is obscure or disconcerting. We are astonished that he did not reserve the discussion of such questions to the little circle of his monastery, at the time when he was living in the community. But the fact is, that the twenty-two sermons on Ezechiel, which we have from him, were preached to the people of Rome, in

593–594. Subsequently he had them bound together and published, with a short preface addressed to Marinianus, bishop of Ravenna, in which he tells him that these homilies, just as they have been pronounced before the people and taken down in shorthand, he had let slumber in peace, having so many other cares to think about! Many people had, however, insisted that he should publish them, and he therefore took up again the notes that had been made of them ("*notariorum schedas*"), corrected them as much the mental anguish caused by Rome's tribulations allowed him leisure for, and now sends them to Marinianus, who had begged for them. But in doing so, he humbly excused himself for sending so poor a work to one who could every day draw refreshment from the profound and limpid writings of an Ambrose or an Augustine.

An ingenious comparison, made by Gregory, reveals to us the method of his exegesis. At Cana the Saviour had caused some *hydriæ*, or empty jars, to be brought, and had ordered that they should be filled with water, which he then changed into wine. The literal meaning of this is that the water with which we are served and with which we have to fill our hearts, becomes changed into wine, when the literal meaning (*historia*) is changed into its spiritual sense, and when the allegory of the mystery is revealed (I, vi, 7). For example, the prophet Ezechiel had a vision of four living creatures, which we know; then appeared a

wheel and in this wheel another wheel (Ezech. i, 16). The literal meaning is evidently an enigma, but, as an allegory, everything becomes clear, to wit, that *the New Testament is hidden in the Old.* He writes: "The wheel is within another wheel, because the New Testament is in the Old Testament. And, as we have already often said, what the Old Testament promised, the New Testament has revealed to us; and what the former announced in obscure terms, the latter proclaims in clear terms. The Old Testament is the prophecy of the New, and the New is the fulfilment of the Old" (I, vi, 15).

That Gregory should have been able to argue themes of this sort before his Roman congregations is an indication, first, that the Holy Scriptures were better known by them than they are by the Christians of to-day; and it is also an indication that, faithful to the tradition of Ambrose and Augustine, they attached a greater value to the allegory than to the letter, and that the most arbitrary allegory did not appear arbitrary to them. Moreover, Gregory was not blind to the fact that Scripture is very often impenetrable. There are found in it texts so obscure that we can only acknowledge our blindness. It is a good occasion to "progress in humility, rather than in intelligence" (II, v, 4). "The task which we have undertaken," he said, "is peculiarly difficult, and let us understand this thoroughly, that we are walking in the darkness

and only groping our way" (II, *prologue*). "Let no one reproach me," he continued, "for daring to discuss profound mysteries which the great commentators have not treated; I approach them with humility and it happens frequently that many points of the Holy Scriptures, which I could not comprehend in my solitude, I have understood when I stood once before my auditors. I owe it to them that I have thus comprehended the meaning, for it is plain that this comprehension was given me for the sake of those, in whose presence it was imparted to me." And the Pope confessed frankly: "I tell you the truth; very often when I am with you I hear what I say" ("*Verum fateor, plerumque vobiscum audio quod dico*" (II, ii, 1).[6]

It is possible also that the Romans who listened to the sermons on Ezechiel were more attentive to the moral lessons, which the Pope found in the sacred text, than to its mysteries. For them, as for us, his precepts were more persuasive than his exegesis. He said, for example, "We commit many sins, but they do not appear serious to us, because, on account of our secret self-love, we shut our eyes to our own faults and flatter ourselves with our deliberate illusion. That is why we regard our grave faults as trivial, and the trivial faults of our neighbour as grave" (I, iv, 9). "We ought, as much as we can do so without sin, to avoid a scandal with our neighbour. But if he is scandalized at the truth, it is better to let the scandal

come, than to sacrifice the truth" (I, vii, 5). And again, "The ineffable wisdom of God instructs the minds of men noiselessly and wordlessly, and when this wisdom does not itself instruct the intelligence of an audience, it is useless for the preacher's voice to exert itself" (I, viii, 17). A true and beautiful thought, which Bossuet was, one day, to use frequently.

Here are some other thoughts in which are easily discovered the influence on Gregory exerted by Saint Augustine. We can through the grace of God undertake good works, "but we cannot carry them out to perfection, if he who orders us to do them does not aid us" ("*si ipse non adjuvat qui jubet*" (I, ix, 2). We recognize here the famous "*Da quod jubes*" of Saint Augustine. The elegant accuracy of the development which Gregory gives to this thought excites our admiration:

"If our good actions are gifts from Almighty God, without any coöperation on our part, why should our merits be rewarded with eternal life? And if they are so much ours, as not to be gifts of God, why thank God for them? The truth is that only our bad actions originate in us. Our good actions, on the contrary, are from both God and from ourselves, because God by a predisposing aspiration causes us to wish for them and by subsequent assistance causes that our wishes may not be in vain, and that we can accomplish what we wish. Hence, through the predisposing grace and

the subsequent good will, that which is a gift of God becomes our merit. . . . Let that be said in opposition to Pelagus and Cælestius" (*ibid.*).

In his sermons on the Gospels, Gregory lamented over the broken state of his health, but we do not find these complaints in the homilies on Ezekiel. Yet Gregory does not fear to speak to his people of his cares, his scruples of conscience, and his terrors. "Son of man," said God to the prophet, "I have set thee to be a watchman for the house of Israel." These words make the Pope tremble; he groans to think that he must lead a life in which all pious contemplation is impossible. He writes: "I am compelled to discuss the interests of the churches and monasteries, to pass judgement on the lives and acts of everybody; sometimes to mix myself up in the affairs of private individuals, at other times to tremble before the swords of barbarians going to war, and to watch out against the wolves which lie in wait for the flock whose guardian I am. . . . When I have to think of so many and such great things, where can I find the time to return to my own affairs and to limit myself entirely to preaching, and not neglect, as I am doing, the ministry of the word?" How much time is wasted in the society of men of this world! How many idle words! What a poor watchman I am! ("*Quis ergo ego vel qualis speculator sum!*"). Gregory often indulges in protestations of this sort (*ibid.*, 26), and it may

be said of them that they are exaggerated. Dear Saint, your hearers will not believe you!

* * * * *

But by far the most important scriptural work of Saint Gregory is his commentary on Job, or *Moralium libri.* In this we are not concerned with sermons preached to the people of Rome. The *Moralia* are a continued commentary on the sacred text, more meditated than carefully composed, the form of which was improvised in conferences held in a monastic community. The edition of them which the author published is dedicated to his friend, Saint Leander, bishop of Seville.

In the letter to Leander which serves as a preface to the *Moralia,* Gregory relates that at Constantinople the monks who had accompanied him thither asked him to write a commentary on the book of Job and to explain to them all the mysteries that in this book were concealed from them. They urged Gregory "not only to bring out the allegorical meanings of the letter of the story, but also to give to those allegorical meanings the moral applications of which they were susceptible." Gregory was too well informed not to appreciate the difficulty of such a work which, he assures us, had hitherto never been attempted by anyone (*opere ante nos hactenus indiscusso*).[7] The proposal to undertake it, which was thus made to him, overwhelmed him. But, lifting his gaze

towards God he thought that "what love commanded through the hearts of his brethren could not be impossible." Therefore, "before the aforesaid brothers," he undertook to comment on Job from the open book, at least the first chapters of it. Then, having found some leisure, he dictated the commentary one chapter after another. Finally, being still less pressed for time, he resumed his commentary, made over the parts which the monks had taken down in shorthand, and tried to preserve a unity of style throughout. But the third part, in which Gregory had returned to his first material, remained as it was, that is, in the form of a colloquy. This method of composition accounts for the prolixity of the work, which has no less than thirty-five books. "Every commentator on Scripture," said the Pope, "ought to do as a river does," and not hesitate to overflow, in order to edify.

Leander was residing at Constantinople when Gregory began the work, and he had added his entreaties to those of the monks who were living there with the author. Accordingly, Gregory had promised to send him this commentary in his home in distant Spain, if he ever finished it. He did finish it and he kept his word as he explains, in his dedicatory letter. But this was not done without difficulty, for his health had been in a deplorable state for years, and he shook with slow but continual fevers. He begs Leander to excuse all that he finds too long and unpolished in

the work, which has nothing literary about it. "The art of speaking which the masters of training in externals teach, I have disdained to bind myself to; a blunder in style does not frighten me, I care nothing for syntax, and I think it wholly unworthy to make the words of the heavenly oracle subject themselves to the rules of Donatus." But the readers of Saint Gregory are accustomed to these exaggerated allusions to his humility.

Who was the author of the book of Job? Some have said Moses, others have thought of one of the prophets. A very useless question, as soon as we believe that the book proceeded from the Holy Spirit, who dictated what was to be written (*qui scribenda dictavit*). If we received a letter from a great personage, should we be curious to know what pen (*calamus*) he used to write it with? The Holy Spirit is its author; what is the good of trying to find out who the scribe was who wrote it under his dictation? (*Præf.*)

Gregory troubles himself scarcely any more in regard to the text. He knows that the book of Job was written in Hebrew, and that, of the two existing Latin translations, the later one (that of Saint Jerome) was made from the Hebrew (he adds: "and from the Arabic"), and that this translation is the good one, unlike the old one (antedating Saint Jerome), which was made from the Septuagint: "*Credendum est quidquid in ea dicitur*" (XX, 32). He does not, however, neglect the old translation, but has recourse to it now

and then, "and because the apostolic See, over which by the will of God I preside, makes use of both translations, my work will be supported by both" (*Epist. ad Leandr.*, 5). Saint Jerome, so justly severe on the Septuagint version of Job and on the Latin translation made from it, would not have been in favour of this eclecticism.

In Job, as in Ezechiel, Gregory does not wish that the literal meaning, or *historia*, should be sacrificed, but neither does he wish that one should rest content with that alone. Job speaks somewhere of unhappy people who eat the bark of trees, and who therefore make us think of those "who venerate in the sacred volumes only the bark or outside of the text, and retain nothing of its spiritual meaning, not suspecting that there is in the words of God something more than the outer covering" (XX, 9).

It happens, however, that certain texts cannot be taken literally; otherwise they may, far from instructing us, lead us into error. Thus it is written of God (Job ix, 13), that "under him they stoop that bear up the world." Who would wish to believe that Job had accepted the poetical fables of giants who sweat under the burden of bearing on their shoulders the mass of the world? When, therefore, the letter of the text gives us a meaning that is unacceptable, "it shows us that it contains something else, which we must search for," that is, an allegory or some moral teaching (*Epist. ad Leandr.*, 3). But we must not adopt

the allegory exclusively and aggressively. Scripture by its mysteries instructs the learned and by its letter most frequently delights the simple. " It is a body of water at once expansive and deep ; in one place a lamb can walk and in another an elephant can swim " (*ibid.*, 4).

The mode of explanation which Gregory proposes to follow here, is that of selecting from the sacred text groups of verses. When he has explained these verses, one by one, in their literal sense, he begins again and interprets these same verses in an allegorical sense, and finally, a third time in a moral sense. He devotes himself, therefore, to the same words three times, in order to express the whole signification that he gives to them. We press the sacred words, he says, as one presses the udders of a cow in milking her (*fortiter premimus*) (XXI, 3).

The fundamental allegory of the book of Job is based on the idea that Job by his trials is a prototype of the passion of Christ. The tempter, Gregory explains (VI, 1), took away everything from Job, including his servants and his children, as he took from Christ the Jewish people and the apostles themselves. Job's body was finally scarcely more than a mass of wounds, and so was the crucified body of Christ and so has ever been Christ's mystical body, the Church, whose members have so often been persecuted and slain. Job's wife wished that he would curse God, and there are carnally-minded souls in the Church,

who are the accomplices of the tempter, from whose solicitations it is impossible to escape. Finally, the friends of Job, who, having come under the pretext of comforting him, overwhelm him with their invectives, are types of the heretics who pretend to defend God and know only how to offend him (VI, 1, and XI, 1).

Gregory was not the first to find thus in the Old Testament a figure of the New. Among the Latins, Saints Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine opened the way to this allegorical interpretation, which has so often the appearance of a thing of chance, but which is also, as for example in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* by Augustine, rich in beautiful and pathetic images. Gregory has neither the lyrical style nor the flights of elequence of Augustine, but makes his way a little awkwardly and sometimes departs from the synthetic view he had at first conceived, as if he discovered in places that there was something artificial and unsatisfying in it.

The persecutions of the Church, he says, have indeed passed away. "The floods of the world's menaces," which seemed to have conspired to annihilate the Holy Church, from this time forward are appeased. "The Lord, after having humbled the princes of the earth, has made use of them to raise the Church higher than the summit of the world, and has controlled the surges of that unchained sea by exalting the Church's power" (XXVIII, 36). The unicorn described by

Job, represents that power of the world which was so cruel to the infant Church, but which we see to-day submissive to it. The unicorn wears to-day a harness and works; and the prince of the world also wears the harness of faith. "I remember to have often seen the unicorn," he says, "when angry, preparing to give some terrible blows and, with its horn raised, threatening the smallest beasts (*bestiolis minimis*) with death, exile, condemnations and terrors . . . then, suddenly, I have seen it make the sign of the cross on the forehead, extinguish the fire of its anger completely, cease all its threats," and give to its Christian subjects the example of humility. So that the Church can truly say, "I have made of my persecutors defenders of the true faith" (XXXI, 5). "For behold, he who formerly raged against the Church and inflicted upon her all manner of torments, now makes laws for her benefit, and brings by persuasion the nations which he can captivate to the grace of faith" (*ibid.*, 9). God grant that this favour of princes may not lead their subjects into hypocrisy!

The heretics, recently so arrogant, are now mute. "The leaders of the heretical crowds (*hæreticarum plebium principes*), perceiving the authority of the Holy Church, cease talking, and, so to speak, put a finger on their lips" (XIX, 27). If they hold meetings, it is only in clandestine gatherings, hoping no doubt that their heresy, which cannot rely upon reason to make itself prevail, will inspire

some respect by its mystery and will appear to the feeble souls which it ensnares, more serious because more secret (XX, 23).

The ancient world persisted in its old system of knowledge, but this opposition is in its turn also disarmed; and now that, by the preaching of the saints, the faith of the Trinity has enlightened mankind, the doctrine of the world has abandoned its attacks against the elect (XXXIII, 20).

To the eyes of Gregory the Church appears not so much in its mystical body, as in its visible establishment. Victorious, protected and all powerful, it will henceforth extend its boundaries outward to the conquest of the world. It seems that the word "Catholic" no longer says enough, and Gregory constantly speaks of the Church as *universalis*. Has not the preaching of the Gospel reached the limits of the world? In reality, it has penetrated into the hearts of almost all nations and has united in the same faith the limits of the Orient and Occident. The language of Britain, which could formerly articulate only some barbarous sounds, has now been adapted to the praise of God and begins to chant the Hebrew Alleluia.

The ocean, lately still swollen with waves, now in docility conveys to heathen lands the feet of the saints. The wrath of the barbarians, which the princes of the earth had not been able to subdue by the sword, is now restrained in the fear of God by simple words, spoken by the lips of bishops

(XXVII, 21). The infidels are converted *en masse*, and the " remnants of the people of Israel, formerly mercilessly rejected, hasten to cast themselves with religious fervour into the bosom of the Mother Church." The world is nearing its end and " the Lord consoles the sorrow of the Church by this concourse of innumerable souls " (XXXV, 35). How far we are here from the sufferings of Job !

The name of *Moralia*, which the commentary bears in literary tradition, would be sufficient to show that it is not the allegory conceived by Gregory which has most held the attention of the world. Gregory, we repeat, was a *moralist*. In his sermons he seeks to make his people conform to the Christian system of morals, in his *Regula pastoralis* he examines the consciences of the bishops, and in his commentary on Job he has especially in view the monks who are listening to him. His purpose, in explaining the Scripture to them, is to instruct them in their vocation, but doubtless many others besides the monks will find in it something to edify them. I would quote here the beautiful page on the wisdom of the world contrasted with that of the just man (*Deridetur justi simplicitas*, X, 48), if it were not already one of those which the Roman Breviary has taken from Saint Gregory, and which we know almost by heart. I would like also to cite the most beautiful, almost classic page, in which Gregory expounds the text, " They build for themselves solitudes " (*Ædificant sibi solitudines*), where, after

having described the tumult of a heart which is a prey to the passions of lust, anger, avarice or ambition, he makes them appreciate the peace of one who has kept himself from these desires and has assured for himself a solitude. "To build solitudes is to drive away from the depths of one's heart the torment of earthly desires, to fix one's gaze upon the soul's eternal fatherland, and to breathe only the love of spiritual tranquillity" (IV, 57–58). I would also like to quote the sportively mischievous page, in which Gregory describes the spirit of gossip which takes possession of servants (*garrula ancillarum turba*), as soon as their *domina* absents herself, as well as the silence which comes into the house again on her return—a pretty example of the flightiness of our thoughts, when they are not controlled by reason (I, 42). I hope the monks did not recognize themselves in the picture of these garrulous maids.

It was for the monks, however, that Gregory gave such wise and precise counsels about the contemplative life. Such a life, he said, is not suited for everyone, and whoever asks to be received into a monastery is often capable of bringing thither nothing but disorder. It would be better for such a man's salvation that he should remain in the world (VI, 57). Gregory enumerates the qualities by which a true vocation is recognized (*ibid.*, 59). The contemplative life is a restoration of the condition given by God to the first man, who had received for his aim in life to

resist falling away through any weakness from the love of his Creator (VIII, 19) : " *Ad contemplandum quippe creatorem homo conditus fuerat, ut ejus semper speciem quæreret atque in solemnitate illius amoris habitaret* " (*ibid.*, 34). To seek God and to live perseveringly in his love, in *solemnitate amoris*, is the essence of the contemplative life, and such a life embodies the entire programme of the monastic state.

In the contemplative life, the Christian who seeks God has the assurance that God responds to his quest and comes to meet him. On the text in Job : " God will thunder wonderfully with his voice " (*Tonabit Deus voce sua mirabiliter*), Gregory writes :

" The voice of God thunders wonderfully, because, with a secret power, in some incomprehensible way, it penetrates our hearts. By hidden movements it presses them into a state of fear or moulds them into love, or cries to them in some way silently, in tones which it is necessary to heed attentively. There is then produced in our minds an irresistible impulse, even when the voice continues to be silent, and this is all the more urgent in us, because the ear of the heart is rendered by it more insensible to the outer tumult. The contemplative soul in its self-communing admires what this inward clamour causes it to hear and feels overflow within it a flood of contrition never known before " (XXVII, 42).

One such page as this is enough to class Gregory

among the masters of mysticism; but it is not the only page that testifies to the author's experience. He writes elsewhere:

"We are among the faithful, we believe what has been taught us of heavenly things, and we love what we believe (*jam quæ credimus amamus*). But, oppressed as we are by idle cares, our sight often becomes confused and darkened. And when, even in this state to which we are reduced, the Lord fills us with astonishing thoughts of himself, his voice seems to be making itself heard in the cloud. . . . The things which we discover from him are of supreme value, but we do not see him yet in the secret inspiration by which he instructs us" (XXX, 4).

Then there are the temptations, which hinder our understanding of the things of God, and, like an overflow of impetuous waters, drown his voice. Nevertheless, God does not abandon us in this condition, but returns immediately to our minds, disperses the clouds raised by the temptations, pours out within us the gentle rain of contrition, and restores to us the sun of our intelligence. He shows us thus how much he loves us, since he does not desert us even when we turn away from him (*et vagantem non cessat amare. Ibid.*, 5). And Gregory reverts with pleasure to that inward assurance that God imparts himself to us in our hours of contrition. Speaking of these privileged souls, he says: "The invisible language of contrition silently speaks in them; and for them the

heavenly song does not slumber (*concentus cæli non dormit*), because their minds know the sweetness of the celestial anthem and strain the ear of love to catch its melody. Within, they hear what they so long for, and their desire for God reveals to them the heavenly blessings that shall be their recompense. The present life, antagonistic as it is to them, is endured by them with difficulty, even if at times it favours them. It is not to this life that they aspire . . . and the song of heaven which penetrates their souls through the ear of the heart, establishes them every day more firmly in the company of the citizens of the celestial home" (*ibid.*, 20).

Let us bear well in mind that this summit of contemplation can be attained only on condition that we maintain a perfect inward silence, comparable to the sleep of Adam, "for, in this silence of the heart, while, through self-communion, we are awake inwardly, outwardly we seem to sleep" (*ibid.*, 54).

Exegesis—that is, *believing* exegesis—is edified by the allegories conceived by the Fathers, but it does not regard them as the interpretation which is obligatory.[8] It adheres to what the Fathers called the *historia*, and believes that the letter must be explained in itself and by itself, when once the problem of the original text is solved. That is to say, the exegesis of Saint Gregory in regard to a book like Job corresponds very little to the method which to-day is ours. The interest which

we have in the *Moralia in Job* consists in the moral reflections which the sacred book suggested to Gregory. In that domain Gregory is a master, though he would not have admitted it.

One of his friends, Innocentius, who had just been made prefect of Africa, wrote him to ask for a copy of the commentary on Job. We do not learn from Gregory's reply whether he gave to Innocentius what he requested, or not; but he congratulated him on his plan of collecting his thoughts in meditation in the midst of worldly cares, and he adds: "If you desire to nourish your soul with a delicious food, read the little treatises of your compatriot Augustine, and beware of preferring our bran to that pure wheat" (J. 1785).[9]

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If the book which we are writing admitted of an analysis of Saint Gregory's doctrine, this would be the proper place for it. But we are obliged to limit ourselves to a few indications.

Gregory did not find himself engaged in great controversies. The affair of the Three Chapters was already a closed incident, in which he had only to maintain the sentence of the Council of 553 and of Pope Vigilius, and he did maintain it as best he could. His conflict with the patriarch Eutychios about the nature of the glorified body amounted for him to an elementary question of exegesis. He was interrogated about the amount of

knowledge possessed by Christ, à propos of the refutation of the error of the "Agnoëtes" which Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria, had published. Gregory in reply refused to recognize in Christ any ignorance whatsoever, attributing, it would seem, to the humanity of Christ the omniscience of the Word (J. 1790); but theologians to-day make some reservations in regard to this opinion of Gregory. The Occident, in order to make an end of the Arianism of the Visigoths or the Lombards, counted on time as an ally, controversy on the subject being exhausted. The problems put forward by Augustinianism had also been settled by the Council of Orange (529). To employ an expression dear to Saint Leo, there were no longer on the horizon of Rome any "*undisciplined questions.*"

Gregory had lived with this horizon before him.[10] He had read little (J. 1830); and to Ætherius, bishop of Lyons, who had asked of Rome the *gesta* or the *scripta* of Saint Irenæus, Gregory replied that he had searched much and long, but had found nothing. He was acquainted with Saint Cyprian and Saint Jerome, and had practised the rules of Saint Ambrose; but it can be said that his master was Saint Augustine. Nevertheless, he did not attach much value to the great speculations of Augustine, and drew inspiration from him as a preacher might do, converting Augustine's golden nuggets into current coin, after his own fashion, which was that of a pastor,

for the needs of his time. Lastly, it is not to Saint Leo, but to Saint Cesarius of Arles that Saint Gregory is related. He did not enlighten the Church so much as he edified it. He epitomized for its use the Christian life into clear, complete, and compact formulas.[11] It was said of him with justice that he was a witness to the Christian doctrine as it was lived and taught, especially the doctrines of works, of the sacraments and of ultimate ends. Gregory, as a philosopher, found in his life little employment; as an apologist, scarcely more; as a theologian, he was a catechist; but as a moralist he was superior, a moralist who with his exalted conscience as Pope and his experience in spirituality, was consumed with zeal for the house of God.[12]

[1] The minutes of the letters sent were preserved in the archive or *scrinium* of the Lateran. John the Deacon (IV, 61) assures us that each year's correspondence formed a volume: "Tot libros in scrinio reliquit quot annos advixit." The collection of Gregory's letters which we have is due chiefly to a compilation of 686 letters selected and published by the order of Pope Hadrian (772–795); but this represents only a limited part of Gregory's correspondence. Consult P. Ewald, "Studien zur Ausgabe des Registers Gregors, I." *Neues Archiv*, III (1878), 433–625, and the preface of Vol. II of the Ewald-Hartmann edition.

[2] The *Liber regulæ pastoralis* was written certainly at the beginning of Gregory's pontificate, as he himself informs us (J. 1369, July 595). It can be said that he was already full of his subject when he wrote his letter to the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, announcing his taking possession of the See.

[3] It would be useful to compare this with *Homil. in Evang.*, XXVI, 5–6, and XL, 2.

[4] See the letter of Gregory (J. 1331, November 594) to the bishop of Luni (Tuscany): "Codicem regulæ pastoralis domno Columbo presbytero transmittendum per harum portitorem direximus, quem vos nolite detinere. Nam usui vestro alium sub celeritate transmittemus." Another letter (J. 1857, January 602) to John, sub-deacon of Ravenna, informs us that the *Regula pastoralis* was brought to Constantinople and translated into Greek by Anastasius, bishop of Antioch. Gregory was sorry that this translation had been made: "Mihi valde displicuit, ut qui meliora habent in minimis occupentur." Gregory was, therefore, not ignorant of the fact that the Greek fathers had written on the duties of bishops; apparently he was thinking of the *De sacerdotio* of Saint John Chrysostom.

[5] Ewald, I, 58–61.

[6] No doubt we have in these words the origin of the legend of the dove that spoke into the ear of the saint. Paul Diac. *Vita G.*, 28.

[7] This statement of Gregory is not accurate. There is a trace, indeed, of a treatise on Job by Saint Hilary. Saint Ambrose has four books *De interpellatione Job et David*. There are also *Commentarii in librum Job* by the priest Philip, a friend of Saint Jerome; also *Adnotationes in Job* by Saint Augustine. We have, furthermore, an *Expositio libri Job* by a writer who has been identified with the follower of Pelagius Julian of Eclanum; to say nothing of the Greeks, Origen, Chrysostom, and others. It is probable that Gregory knew nothing of this literature.

[8] Gregory wrote: "In intellectu sacræ scripturæ respui non debet quidquid sanæ fidei non resistit. Sicut enim ex uno auro alii murenulas, alii anulos, alii dextralia ad ornamentum faciunt, ita ex una sacræ scripturæ intellegentia expositores quique per innumeros intellectus quasi varia ornamenta componunt, quæ tamen omnia ad decorem cælestis sponsæ proficiunt" (J. 1268, August 593).

[9] Gregory had learned that Marinianus, bishop of Ravenna, caused to be read in church (*publice ad vigilias*)

the commentary on Job; and declares that he had learned of this with regret, "quia non est illud opus populare, et rudibus auditoribus impedimentum magis quam provectum generat." He advises him to read by preference some commentaries on the Psalms, apparently those of Augustine (J. 1857, January 601).

[10] Schubert, 200, very pertinently connects Gregory with the strictly Roman tradition: "With his popular Augustinianism," he writes, "Gregory kept, on the whole, in the line of the mentality of the Popes who had preceded him, with the exception of Gelasius, and only caused the completion of the evolution begun with Innocent I." That does not, however, hinder M. Schubert, a page later, from reproaching Gregory with having "for ever legalised in the Latin Church the *Vulgar Katholizismus* of the time when Roman culture was breaking down." The opinion of Harnack is the same: "Gregory," he writes, "has nowhere promulgated one original thought; he has rather preserved in everything the traditional doctrine, but impoverishing it and lowering the spiritual element to the level of a coarse intelligence. . . . By the way in which Gregory accentuated the different doctrines and traditional practices, he created the vulgar type of mediæval Catholicism, and the tone which he gave to Christian emotion is that with which the Catholicism of to-day still finds itself in harmony." For the whole development, see *Dogmengeschichte*, III (1890), 233–244. Also R. Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte*, II (1898), 3–13. Melancthon (Seeberg, 12) had already said: "Gregorius quem isti Magnum, ego præsultorem καὶ δαδοῦχον theologiæ pereuntis voco. . . . " It is a mistake of Protestant criticism to present Gregory as the creator of Latin theology and of the mentality of his time.

[11] M. Grabman, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben* (1926), 518, points out the influence exerted by Gregory on the religious life of the Middle Ages, and he thinks that this influence has not yet been sufficiently studied. See, however, Dom C. Butler, *Western Mysticism* (1922). De Ghellinck, 24–25, calls attention to the *excerpta* of Paterius, drawn from Saint Gregory, the teacher who is constantly quoted from in "Selected pages," in

Excerpta, or *Flores*. *Ibid*, 26, 77, 78. This success was to last down to the time of Peter Lombard and his *Sentences*, which established for some time the primacy of Saint Augustine.

[12] We should not be thorough, did we not mention what the canonists owed to Saint Gregory's letters down to the epoch of Gratian. See, for example, P. Fournier, "L'Origine de la collection canonique Anselmo dedicata," *Mélanges*. P. F. Girard (1912), I, 488. By the same, "Le Décret de Burchard de Worms," *Revue hist. eccl.* (1911), 471.

CHAPTER V

SAINT GREGORY AND ITALY

ECCLESIASTICAL Italy was under the jurisdiction of four archiepiscopal Sees situated respectively at Milan, Aquileia, Ravenna, and Rome. Upon the latter See depended the provinces, which, at the beginning of the fifth century, still formed the jurisdiction of the Vicar of the City, and extended from Tuscany to Calabria and Apulia, under the name of the "Suburban Regions" (*regiones suburbicariæ*). Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica also formed part of this jurisdiction. At the time of Saint Gregory, the arrangement of the imperial provinces had broken down, but the church dioceses still remained and with them their grouping into archiepiscopal Sees. Rome's special hegemony over the bishops in her metropolitan jurisdiction likewise remained, but this has been so often described that we need not refer to it again here. There are, however, some new facts worthy of mention.

First, the ruin of old churches, in consequence of the invasion of the Lombards or other calamities. Of these Gregory writes:

"The misfortunes of the times and the depopula-

tion resulting from them impel us to help the ruined churches and to provide for their future safety by preventive measures. Having, therefore, learned that the church of Minturnum is by the prevailing desolation deprived of clergy and even of parishioners, and having received your petition on this subject with the proposal to unite it with the church of Formiæ, of which you, my brother, are the bishop . . . we have deemed it necessary, in the interest both of that desolated locality and of your own church, which is poor, to transfer the revenues of the said church of Minturnum and all that might formerly, and may now, belong to it, to your church of Formiæ." [1]

The Pope exercises here a double right: first, of jurisdiction, by which he unites a moribund church to a living one; and secondly, of domain, in virtue of which he transfers the properties and revenues of the former to the latter. The desolation of certain of these churches is not always so great that they cannot hope, some day, to revive, but they are unable to effect their rehabilitation themselves and by their own resources. Thus Populonia has no longer a bishop, and nobody to administer penance to the dying or baptism to infants! In a normal province, the comprovincial bishops would come to its assistance; in the archbishopric of Rome only the Pope can intervene. So Gregory does intervene and commands the bishop of Rosella to go to Populonia, as *visitator*, and to ordain there a priest, a cardinal priest

(*unum cardinalem presbyterum*) and two deacons. This priest, entitled cardinal, will in all probability be put in charge of the service of the cathedral. For the parishes, containing doubtless the smaller or rural churches, the *visitator* will ordain three priests.[2] The office of *visitator*, thus conceived, is a delegation from the Pope to a church of his metropolitan jurisdiction, where a bishop is wanting.

Gregory also sends a *visitator* to preside over the election of a bishop, in case a See becomes vacant, if he anticipates that the election is to be a difficult one. He writes to the bishop of Misenum :[3]

" Having learned that Liberius, bishop of the church of Cumæ, has departed this life, we formally command you to visit this church. You will go thither and see to it that no promotion of clerks be made and that nothing of the revenue, furniture, consecrated vessels, or anything else whatsoever of the church be touched. . . . You will also earnestly exhort the clergy and the people to have nothing to do with any cliques, but to agree in asking for a bishop a worthy recipient of so great a ministry, in accordance with the ancient canons of the Church. When he shall have been appointed —the exact term of the Pope is *postulatus*—and shall have been furnished with the necessary official report of the proceedings (*cum solemnitate decreti*), confirmed by the signatures of all present, and shall have been provided also with the testi-

mony of your letters, he is to come to us to be consecrated (*sacrandus*)."

Gregory reminds the *visitator* that he must not allow a cleric unknown to the church to be elected, except in case this church should possess no cleric worthy of the episcopal office, and that he must not allow a layman to be elected, whatever merit may be seen in him. We have in the present case a formal delegation, in virtue of which the papal delegate will take care that order is preserved and, the See being vacant, will proceed to the election, and will make certain that the rules are observed and will testify to the fact. The election itself is always the affair of the vacant church, but the consecration is reserved to the Pope, who must always verify the regularity of the election and the merit of the man elected.[4]

The Pope, always by his authority as metropolitan archbishop, can unite one church to another, which is precisely what happened to the church of Cumæ which he united to that of Misenum (J. 1197), doubtless at the suggestion of the *visitator* whom he had appointed. The distance is not great between the two cities, and the population of the region is not so numerous that it needs two bishops. Since the See of Cumæ is vacant, the Pope consigns it to the bishop of Misenum, "*præsentis auctoritatis pagina*"; and he permits him even to establish his See in either one of the churches which he prefers, provided that the celebration of the holy mysteries is assured also in

the city where he shall not reside, and that he shows so much the more zeal in exhortation and the winning of souls there.

In the examples which we have just cited, we see that Gregory exercises a veritable guardianship over the churches of which he is the archbishop, whenever a See is vacant; but even when the bishop is in office, Gregory still exercises a tutelage over him.

It is true, he avoids intruding on his jurisdiction. He severely reprimands the *defensor Siciliæ*, who was said to have committed the fault of passing judgement on clerics, in defiance of the right of their bishops to do so ("*despectis eorum episcopis*"). "If," says the Pope, "this be true, we enjoin you by this letter never to do it again. For, if the jurisdiction of each bishop is not respected, what is the result, but to destroy ecclesiastical discipline, which must be maintained by us?" "*Nam si sua unicuique episcopo jurisdictio non servatur quid aliud agitur, nisi ut per nos per quos ecclesiasticus custodiri debuit ordo confundatur?*" (J. 1812).

In the time of Saint Gregory, the monks in their monasteries remained subject to the bishop of the place. The Pope wrote to the abbot of a monastery situated at Sorrento, to unite to his monastery a poor convent of Campania which had suffered so much from the ravages of war, that not a single monk was left there. The abbot of Sorrento is bidden to manage the affairs of the deserted con-

vent, and, as soon as the enemy permits it, he is to send thither some monks to resume there the life of prayer (*opus Dei celebrare*). But he must take care. The reconstituted community will not be dependent on the bishop of Sorrento, but on the bishop of Nocera, since the convent to be restored is situated in the diocese of Nocera. We intend to respect the rights of both bishops ("*Jura sua singulis episcopis inviolata servemus*" (J. 1846).[5]

Gregory has his eyes open in regard to his suffragan bishops. The complaints which are made about them reach Rome and are examined summarily, without being referred to the council which periodically assembles there. Then the Pope renders his decision, if there is occasion for it, charging the execution of his judgement to the rectors of the Patrimony who are on the spot and to whom neither appeal nor resistance can be made. The bishop of Amalfi, for example, was denounced at Rome, for not residing near his church. The sub-deacon Anthemius, who had charge of the Patrimony of Campania, was instructed by Gregory to command the bishop not to leave his church, but to live there as a priest should live ("*more sacerdotali*"). If, after this injunction, he does not mend his ways, he will be sent into a monastery (J. 1403). It will be seen, therefore, that Gregory feels himself responsible for the conduct of his suffragans; that, if they are accused, he does not need to bring them before the Roman court, but judges them himself; and

finally that he can interdict [6] them, or relegate them to a monastery, like clerics condemned to do penance, which is a way of deposing them, for he can at once provide a successor for them, as if the See were vacant. The bishop of Naples was not treated by him with any more consideration than the bishop of Amalfi. We have a letter from Gregory "to the clergy, nobles, *ordo* and *plebs* of Naples" (J. 1156), in which the Pope takes note of the fact that their bishop has been condemned to do penance and is therefore deprived of his episcopal office, "*pœnitentiæ reservatus, sacerdotii honore privatus est.*" The charges brought against him must have been extremely serious, for the Pope writes that, even if he had been judged without mercy, he ought to have been condemned to death by laws human and divine. There is no evidence that the sentence had been pronounced in council, and probably the guilty bishop had been condemned to penance by the order of the Pope himself. Now the Pope informs the Neapolitans that they must elect a successor, for the canons of the Church require that, when a See becomes vacant by reason of the death or deposition of a bishop, the church shall not long remain without another prelate. Moreover, the Pope sends the bishop of Nepi, as *visitator*, to Naples, to superintend the election.

This affair of Naples, about which we have a great many letters from Gregory, is an example of the power which he can exercise, almost at his

own discretion, over a bishop of his province. He had to deal in this case with some hotheads in Naples, and two years had to pass before he could settle with the factions and obtain an election. Even then, Fortunatus, the one finally elected, did not prove to be entirely trustworthy. When he died, Gregory was obliged to order his successor Paschasius, to settle up his accounts, for he had left a confused mass of debts. Sixty-three *solidi* were due to the clerics of Fortunatus, one hundred to the clerics of the church, fifty to the foreign clerics, and one hundred and fifty to "men of good condition, who had fallen into poverty and who could not beg publicly for alms," besides thirty-six *solidi* to beggars (J. 1811). We see from this how attentive Gregory was to the smallest details and how anxious he was to keep accounts in order.

After that was over, Paschasius seems to have governed his church in peace, until suddenly a new storm burst over Naples, and the sub-deacon Anthemius was warned by Gregory that complaints about the situation there were accumulating in Rome. It was alleged that Paschasius was negligent; that Paschasius did not busy himself with his church, or his monasteries, or with the poor; that Paschasius did not receive the requests of petitioners, or heed the advice of men of good sense; that Paschasius' chief occupation was building boats, and that he had lost thus four hundred *solidi* and more. The sub-

deacon Anthemius must remonstrate with the bishop, in the presence of other bishops or nobles, and if Paschasius does not correct his errors, let him be sent to Rome, "so that he may learn here what it is proper for a bishop to do and to be, in order to conform himself to the fear of God."[7]

But Gregory had still another affair with Paschasius. One of his deacons was accused by the sub-deacon Hilarus, but the latter could not prove his accusation. Why did not Paschasius punish the calumniator? He must deprive him of his office, he must have him whipped in public, he must have him exiled, and "let the chastisement of one serve for the correction of all." Gregory adds: "We wish that our brother Paschasius should allow himself a *vicedominus* and a majordomo in order that he can receive guests and the causes which are brought before him." The advice is good, but it is not only an advice, it is a command. If Paschasius does not heed it, the sub-deacon will have to address himself to the clergy and cause a *vicedominus* and a majordomo to be elected (J. 1845). Gregory regards this interference as his duty, on account of the weakness which he reproaches in the bishop of Naples—*ratione peccati* we should say—and also in view of the responsibility which he (Gregory) has for all the churches, as he himself says.[8] Paschasius could, however, have complained in this case of having been treated harshly, and he would not have been the only one. Gregory, in

fact, with his imperious zeal often wounded those whom he wished to correct. When, however, he learned that he had given pain, his humility and generosity made him write letters, like the following to Opportunus of Teramo :[9]

" It has been reported to me that, ever since I wounded you, dear friend (literally " your Dearness ") by severe words on the occasion of certain things which had justly displeased me, you have felt a grief and sadness which never leave you. Therefore, my very dear son, I want you to know that I addressed those words to you, not through hardness of heart but through my love for your soul. Come back, therefore, with all your soul to God. Consider how fleeting this present life is. Hasten to deserve the recompenses of eternity. With all your might mortify the flesh which, so long as it continued in pleasure, mortified the soul. Be good to your neighbour, devote more time to chanting sacred songs and to tears of repentance, and endure with patience the wrongs done you by others. If some injustice has been committed against you unlawfully, esteem it a blessing. Thus doing, through contempt for the temporal things from which you suffer, you will gain the kingdom of heaven. May God fill to overflowing your heart and body with the salvation of heavenly grace, and may his Spirit make you feel inwardly what is good, that you may be capable of realizing it outwardly in your mode of life." [10]

The hand of Gregory could also be very pliant,

when there was need of it. One of the first acts of his pontificate was to make known to the bishops of Sicily that he confided that Patrimony to the Roman sub-deacon Peter, and that the said rector should represent among them the authority of the apostolic See. It could have been supposed from this that the bishops of Sicily were to be thenceforth subject to this sub-deacon, as to a *vicedominus*, but they were surprised to see these same bishops invited, indeed ordered (*jussimus*) by the Pope to meet once a year, either at Syracuse or Catania, "to consider the interests of the churches of the province," the needs of the poor, and the correction of disorders. For the first time, a province in the metropolitan jurisdiction of the Pope will henceforth have its regular provincial council, in which, it is true, the sub-deacon Peter will take part; but this council will have the power and competence to pronounce judgements (J. 1067).

Soon after, the Pope completed this reform. Maximianus, his friend, having become bishop of Syracuse, Gregory instituted in Sicily a vicariate, as had been formerly instituted at Thessalonica and at Arles, and Maximianus became vicar of the apostolic See "over all the churches of Sicily" (J. 1159). Thereafter only difficult cases (*causæ majores*), which the vicar should decline to settle, were to be tried in Rome. Nevertheless, in making this concession to Sicily, Gregory declared that he invested Maximianus with this office merely

individually, and that the vicariate was to be attached to his (the vicar's) person, not to his See. It was therefore a revocable concession ; but how remarkable it was that the metropolitan centralization which was being imposed by Rome ever more closely on the suburban regions (*regiones suburbicariæ*), should be extended thus, even if it were only as an exception and an experiment, for the benefit of Sicily !

In the same way, the bishops of the metropolitan province came to Rome once a year, for the birthday of Saint Peter. For a long time, the bishops of Sicily had been authorized to come to Rome only every three years, but Gregory now allowed them to come only every five years. The journey was a painful and even perilous one, and that was a valid reason enough ; but, besides that, the Byzantine prætor of Sicily looked rather suspiciously on this assembly of its bishops in Rome (J. 1465). For we must not forget that Sicily was not dependent on the Exarch of Ravenna, but was directly under the control of Constantinople. Gregory, therefore, by modifying the subjection of Sicily to Rome, showed probably his respect for the emperor's authority.

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Africa, ever since it had been retaken from the Vandals by Justinian, had been governed by an Exarch, the " Exarch of Africa," with whom the Pope kept in constant contact. It may well be

doubted whether he relied much on this Exarch, especially in regard to the repression of heretics, in conformity with the laws of the Republic.[11] The Arians had indeed disappeared with the Vandals, but the Donatists made Gregory uneasy by their tendency to reappear upon the scene. Fortunately the Exarch was there to attend to them, but the Pope counted on him also to strengthen ecclesiastical discipline and to "restore the union of the scattered churches." The Exarch of Africa became, however, as distrustful as the prætor of Sicily, if any of the African bishops wished to go to Rome and appeal to the Pope in person, and Gregory actually asked the Exarch Gennadius for permission for them to do so ("*permittite*") (J. 1141). Is it possible that such a "permission" was necessary?

The Catholic episcopate, reconstituted in Africa, was anxious to retain the liberties which had been a characteristic of African Catholicism. Accordingly, the bishops had previously addressed to Pope Pelagius II a petition, begging that "all the customs which had been maintained ever since the beginning and since the ordinances of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, down to the present time, should be preserved." Gregory replied to this request, which had been sent to his predecessor, and wrote "to all the bishops of Numidia" that he considered their petition just, and that he would allow the desired customs, since they had in them nothing contrary to the

Catholic Church. We do not know the details of this request of the Africans, but we see the Pope declare that he is in accord with them concerning the principal points, as well as with others which were to be confirmed ("*de primatibus constituendis ceterisque capitulis.*") Nevertheless, he forbade them to confer the highest episcopal dignity on bishops who were converts from Donatism (J. 1144).

It is worthy of note that the African bishops had felt the need of having their "customs" confirmed at Rome, and this request is interesting as a proof of the Roman supremacy. Gregory willingly confirmed all the customs asked for except one, but this exception shows that Rome had still the right of veto in the matter. Gregory had, however, no intention of tightening the bonds which bound these African bishops to Rome, more than was expedient. He knew how difficult it is to judge a case, when one is not on the spot (J. 1416). Nor had he any idea of allowing himself a vicar in Africa. He knew, moreover, that several of the African bishops were devoted to the apostolic See, especially Columbus, a bishop in Numidia, of whom Gregory writes:

"I know your adherence and devotion to the apostolic See which you manifest with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your soul." ("*Tota te mente, toto corde, totaque anima apostolicæ Sedi inhærere ac esse devotum . . . scio*") (J. 1252).

Columbus obligingly informed the Pope about religious matters in Africa, and thus Gregory was able to make suggestions in the right direction. But the greatest prudence was necessary; for on account of his receiving so many letters from Rome, Columbus made many enemies, as the Pope himself tells us (J. 1448). Evidently a strong party was opposed to any kind of subjection to Rome and to any sacrifice of the liberties of the African Church. This party also sought, and doubtless found, encouragement at Constantinople (J. 1548).

There is a famous letter of Saint Gregory to Dominicus, bishop of Carthage, who, at the beginning of Gregory's pontificate, sent to Rome two bishops, with a deacon and a notary, to congratulate him on his elevation. This action on the part of Dominicus had been long expected, and Gregory does not conceal the fact. It seems probable that the bishop of Carthage insisted on receiving from the Pope the privileges of the Church of Africa. On this subject Gregory writes him :[12]

" As for the ecclesiastical privileges which you, dear brother (' your Fraternity ') request, consider them as granted without hesitation, because, just as we defend our own rights, so we respect the rights of each church. God be thanked, I grant to no one more than his right, and I refuse to no one through ambition what he has a right to. In every thing I desire to honour my brothers (the

bishops) and I endeavour to maintain the honour of each one, provided there is no conflict of rights between them."

In these words, Gregory replies to the mental reservations of the African episcopate which was inclined to suspect the apostolic See of a design to confiscate the rights of the bishops, and through ambition to dominate them (*ambitu stimulante*). The apostolic See wishes to hold the balance evenly between all the bishops and to respect the rights of each church, "*singulis quibusque Ecclesiis sua jura servamus.*" It is clear that this respect is a part of the duty of the sovereign apostolic See, and Gregory in his turn will yield none of the rights pertaining to this See ("*nostra defendimus*"). Gregory writes many times to Dominicus, the bishop of Carthage, and always in the most affectionate terms and without taking advantage of his own primacy. "It is proper," he remarks on one occasion, "that I should pray for you beside the most holy body of blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, and that you should pray for me beside the saint and martyr Cyprian."[18]

This gracious reciprocity of prayers does not, however, imply the equality of Saint Peter and Saint Cyprian. There come to him from Africa appeals which he does reject, but he sends them back to Africa to judges whom he designates. Thus he exercises his primacy of jurisdiction, without appearing to exercise it.

In the Italy which lay beyond the frontiers of

the *regiones suburbicariæ*, the Pope no longer knows his bishops, one by one, as he knew his suffragans. It might be said that of those outside bishops he knows only their metropolitan. All the powers which he, as bishop of Rome, exercises in his quality of metropolitan are by law reserved to this metropolitan. We have twenty-nine letters addressed by Gregory to the bishop of Ravenna, but not one to any of Ravenna's suffragans, except that one in which he nominates the bishop of Ficoclae (Cervia) as *visitator* of Ravenna, when the See was vacant (J. 1336). In this he says that the bishop of Ravenna, as soon as he is elected, is to come to Rome, where he will be consecrated by the Pope. He also takes part usually in the Council of Rome.

The bishop John, whom Gregory found in the See of Ravenna, was a Roman of education and a distinguished career. When he died (January 11, 595), the electors being at variance, two names of Ravenna candidates were proposed to the Pope, who accepted neither and persuaded the two parties to ask of him a monk from his monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, Marinianus, and accordingly he was consecrated, although his desire to become bishop had been very small (J. 1367).

The pallium was, in the sixth century, a distinguishing mark of the Pope and also of the bishop of Ostia, as being the consecrator of the Pope. No other Occidental bishop then had the

privilege of wearing it, unless by the special permission of the Pontiff. In fact, however, we see it constantly represented as worn by the bishops of Ravenna in the city's mosaics. The origin and signification of the pallium remain for us problematical.[14] Gregory was so careful and punctilious on this point, that it might have been thought that the pallium was something belonging to Saint Peter. In reality, Gregory lived at a time when insignia had assumed great importance. He himself created none, but he saw to it that the insignia already existing should not be usurped by any one, and that the parties interested should scrupulously observe the conditions of the privilege with which they had been honoured. To Marinianus, bishop of Ravenna, Gregory wrote (J. 1377) as follows:

"Through the favour of the apostolic See and in accordance with the order of the ancient custom, we have decided to grant the use of the pallium to you, my brother, who have just taken in hand the government of the Church of Ravenna. You will bear in mind that you can wear the pallium only in your own city church, when you pass out in procession from the audience-room (*salutatorium*), after having dismissed your sons (the laity), in order to celebrate the holy solemnities of the Mass. When the Mass is finished, you will be careful to lay aside the pallium when you re-enter the *salutatorium*. We do not allow you to wear it outside of the church, except four times a

year, in the Litanies, as we explained to your predecessor John."

We have seen that the bishop of Ravenna was always consecrated by the Pope, in memory of the time when Ravenna belonged to the metropolitan province of Rome. The assistant bishops of Ravenna were consecrated by the bishop of Ravenna, and he alone intervened when a See was to be provided for in his province. The Pope thought that the most he might allow himself to do, was to stimulate the bishop's zeal sufficiently not to let a See remain vacant more than three months, conformably to the *statuta sacrorum canonum* (J. 1485).

Gregory was very desirous of having a perfectly reliable colleague at Ravenna. If he was strict with him in the matter of the pallium, he had in other respects full confidence in his discretion, and was on as good terms with Marinianus as he had been with his predecessor, John, to whom he dedicated his *Regula pastoralis*. This confidence went so far as to ask John to watch over the assistant bishops of Rome, who cannot come to Rome, because the Lombards bar their way. Gregory relied on John, not on any account to convoke them in Ravenna, but to reprimand them, if necessary, by letter and, if any serious matter should arise, to inquire into it and send his report of it to Rome, where what is conformable to the laws and canons ("*quæ legibus canonibusque conveniunt*") will be decided (J. 1181).

The bishop of Milan, unlike the bishop of Ravenna, was not consecrated at Rome by the Pope. He was elected at Milan; but at that time Milan was in the hands of the Arian Lombards, and when, in 593, the bishop Laurentius died, it was in Genoa, on imperial territory, that the election of his successor took place. At the request of the electors, who were apparently anxious to legitimize the election, Gregory sent, as delegate to it, the Roman sub-deacon John. To the rector of the Patrimony of Liguria[15] (to which Genoa belonged) Gregory wrote as follows:

"As the apostolic See is, thank God, incontestably at the head of all the churches ("*apostolica sedes, Deo auctore, cunctis prælata constat ecclesiis*"), so we are most concerned when we are called upon to serve as arbiters concerning the consecration of a bishop" ("*ad consecrandum antistitem, nostrum expectatur arbitrium*").

The word *arbitrium* here implies the consent of the Pope to the election and consequently to the consecration of the bishop. Now the Milanese clergy had elected the Milanese deacon, Constantius. The Roman sub-deacon John was to go to Genoa, to inquire into the regularity of the election and to have Constantius consecrated by his own bishops, "as the custom of antiquity requires, with the assent of our authority" ("*a propriis episcopis, sicut antiquitatis mos exigit, cum nostræ auctoritatis assensu*"). It may be doubted whether this assent of the Pope was a

"custom of antiquity," but it was at least the rule in Gregory's time, who did not intend to relinquish anything of his own right, any more than to trespass on the rights of others. He had said this to the bishop of Carthage and he now repeated it emphatically to the Milanese clergy: "As we demand our rights from others, so we render to each and all *their* rights" ("*sicut ab aliis nostra exigimus, ita singulis sua jura servamus*").[16]

As soon as Constantius had been consecrated, Gregory, in replying to the new bishop's first letter, sent him the pallium, with the message that the Pope expected him to exalt this honour by showing humility.[17] As for the rest, the bishop of Milan alone was to deal with his assistant bishops and to provide for the Sees which should become vacant. Certain cases, however, after they have been investigated and judged at Milan, can be referred to Rome.

Thus there arose a question regarding a bishop by the name of Pompeius who had been arraigned before Constantius, but whom Constantius did not think he had the power either to condemn or to absolve. The record of the charges (*gesta*) was taken to Rome and submitted to Gregory. This might be regarded as an appeal, but the Pope had meant by an appeal to Rome a right enjoyed by someone *who had been condemned* ("*ad sedem apostolicam appellatur*"). In the case of Pompeius, Gregory declined to render a decision, for, he said, "in a matter which is doubtful it is improper

to pronounce a sentence which is certain" ("*Grave est satis et indecens ut in re dubia certa dicatur sententia*").[18]

There is something even better in this reply to Constantius. He says that the charges (*gesta*), as they are presented, might have justified a sentence, if they had been followed by the confession of the accused and if this avowal had been spontaneous and not one of those confessions "which the vehemence of suffering often extorts, when one sees even innocent persons forcibly induced to declare themselves guilty. The accused bishop complains of having been 'crucified by imprisonment and consumed by hunger'; under such circumstances, would his confession, even if he had made one, be worth anything?"

Gregory refused, therefore, to condemn an accused man, especially an absent one, and to pronounce a sentence which the bishop of Milan had hesitated to inflict. He wrote: "We cannot and must not decide rashly in the case of a bishop, lest we, whose right it is to revise the sentences of others, may be found (may God forbid it!) blameworthy in our own."

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We have had occasion to mention how Gregory, during the pontificate of Pelagius II, had been involved in an attempt to reconcile to the apostolic See some bishops of Istria and the bishop of Aquileia, their metropolitan.

The schism of Aquileia was the residuum of the Occidental episcopate's opposition to the œcumenical council of 553 and to the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Ravenna and its suffragan bishops had been the first to submit; Milan subsequently did the same, with its bishop Laurentius, at the time when Gregory was prefect of the city, as will be remembered. When Gregory became Pope, one of his first thoughts was to bring back the Istrians into the unity of the Church. He therefore summoned the bishop of Aquileia and the bishops of his group to Rome, where their difficulties could be discussed in council, and this he did with the approval of "the most Christian and most serene Master of things," the emperor Mauricius.[19] The bishop, however, declined the invitation and eventually the same emperor begged the Pope to leave the Istrians in peace. Gregory was able to detach a few dissenters one by one, but the schism lasted longer than he did and was only abolished in the pontificate of Pope Honorius.[20]

Milan, with a bishop like Constantius, was closely allied to the apostolic See. The king of the Lombards, Autharis, had married a princess of Bavaria, Theodelinda, who was a Catholic, and she, on the death of Autharis, had remained queen and made Agilulf, the husband whom she then chose, king. She did not convert him from Arianism, and we see no evidence that Gregory ever indiscreetly insisted on this point. Thanks

to her, however, Catholicism was certain to gain the Lombards, whenever God should choose the favourable moment. Among the assistant bishops of Constantius, some who had not forgiven the apostolic See for the condemnation of the Three Chapters would have liked to see the queen refuse to receive Holy Communion from Constantius under the absurd pretext that he was no more in harmony with the Council of Chalcedon than the Pope was. The old quarrel therefore continued, and it was asserted that to condemn the Three Chapters was to deny the faith of Saint Leo and of Chalcedon. If these evil counsellors had prevailed, Milan might have become, like Aquileia, a schismatic patriarchate. Gregory saw the danger and, in order to avert it, addressed himself directly to the queen, as follows :[21]

" I have been informed that some bishops have led your Majesty to commit the scandal against the Holy Church of abstaining from the communion of Catholic unity. By as much as we love you, by so much are we distressed about you, because you are putting your confidence in tactless and foolish men, who not only do not know what they themselves say, but can hardly understand what is said to them."

Furthermore, the Pope protests that the faith of Chalcedon is in no danger whatever, and that, if anyone dared to assail it, he should feel for him only reprobation and horror.

The Pope's correspondence with the queen

Theodelinda takes it for granted that the truce, concluded in 593, is loyally observed. A friendly relationship had been established between Pavia and Rome, and the policy of Gregory was to induce the Exarch of Ravenna to conclude with the king of the Lombards a peace which should extend to the whole of Italy. But the Exarch Romanus remained always obdurate. Accordingly Gregory wrote to a high functionary in the palace of Ravenna who, he knew, was devoted to Romanus, suggesting that he try to give him some useful advice. "Note well that Agilulf, king of the Lombards, is not unwilling to make a general peace," he says, and then indicates the conditions which the Lombard lays down.[22] It is evident from this that the Pope was negotiating with the king and had obtained from him equitable proposals, but even this enraged the Exarch, who referred the matter to the emperor Mauricius. We shall subsequently see with what offensive harshness the emperor rejects Gregory's propositions. But Gregory stood firm against all opposition, and there was plenty of it. It was, for example, necessary to make sure of the defence of the threatened cities, and to this he devoted himself so ardently that it is impossible to read without emotion the letter which he wrote to the bishop of Terracina concerning the news that many men in that city were refusing to mount guard on the walls. He says: "Let no man, by invoking the name of our Church of Rome, or that of his own church, or under any

other pretext exempt himself from the service of the watch (*vigiliæ*) and let all citizens be compelled to perform it."[23] Who would have expected to see the Pope looking after these *vigiliæ?* He conjured the bishop of Cagliari in Corsica to form a sacred union of his people: "When the enemy is threatening you, you must not suffer from discord among your people. Let the bishop provide for the works of defence and for the provisioning of his city, so that, if the Lombards appear, they may have no chance!"[24]

Man-hunting is one of the horrors of war, as the Lombards waged it. A cleric of Siponto had been captured thus and had been forced to pay 120 *solidi* for his ransom. Gregory requested the bishop of Siponto to pay these 120 *solidi* from the money of his church.[25] To ransom captives, the bishop of Fano also had borrowed money and did not know how to repay it. Gregory authorized him[26] to sell the sacred vessels of his church to the amount due. One day, Gregory received a magnificent present of thirty gold libræ. Immediately he asked the donor if he might devote half of it to ransom prisoners, for, in the preceding year the Lombards had taken Crotona and "a number of men and women of noble rank had been carried away as booty, the children being separated from their fathers and mothers, and wives from their husbands." Some of them, he added, have been ransomed, but how many are still in the hands of those abominable Lombards (*nefandissimos Lango-*

bardos), for the sums demanded for their liberation are exorbitant![27]

Gregory does not lose hope of persuading Ravenna to treat with the Lombard king, but the bishop Marinianus by his inertia drives him almost to despair. He writes to a mutual friend, the monk Secundus, at Ravenna: "Tell him to change his soul. Let him not think that reading and praying are sufficient for him. He has no right to live far away from everything and insensible to suffering. He must bear fruit! He must have a generous hand, *largam manum habeat*, and must hasten to those who are in need, for he must consider the misery of others as his own, *alienam inopiam suam credat*, and if he does not do so, he bears the name of bishop in vain. I have warned him by letter to think of his soul, but he has written me nothing in reply, absolutely nothing! which makes me think that he has not even deigned to read my words. . . . Therefore, dear friend, say all this to him privately."[28]

Secundus was indeed the Pope's right-hand man. He took great interest in promoting peace and he sought direct contact with Agilulf, but the Exarch Romanus obstinately wished to know nothing and to foresee nothing, not even the possible conquest of Corsica and Sardinia by the Lombards, which the Pope warned him was imminent. The Exarch even replied to the entreaties of the Pope and his envoy Castorius by an anonymous libel which he posted up by night

in Ravenna. How thoroughly Byzantine! The Pope, usually so deferential, now rose up at this defiance and, in April 596, sent to the bishop of Ravenna, as well as to his episcopal colleagues, priests, deacons, clerics, nobles, people and soldiers, residing permanently or temporarily in Ravenna, a calm and serious letter, by virtue of which the author of the libel, in which Gregory is treated as a criminal because he is working for peace, is forbidden to partake of the body and blood of Christ.[29] The author of the libel took good care not to disclose his identity.

The Exarch Romanus died a few months later. His successor Callinicus attached more value to being on good terms with the Pope, and one of his first acts was to go to Rome for the festival of Saint Peter. Thenceforth Gregory's policy prevailed without difficulty. In the autumn of 598, the king and the Exarch concluded a peace, or rather a truce; but at all events it was the first that Italy had known since the invasion thirty years before! Gregory received with joy the envoys (*missi*) whom the Lombard king sent to Rome to announce the peace. "We thank your Excellency," Gregory wrote the king, "that you have listened to my request (*petitionem nostram audientes*) and have ordered a peace which can be only advantageous to both parties. For if (God forbid such a thing!) this peace had not been concluded, we should have again seen the blood of the poor peasants shed, whose labour is so useful

to us both" (*"miserorum rusticorum sanguis quorum labor utrisque proficit funderetur"*).[30] In fact, Italy lived then only on the labour of the fields, and the peasants who cultivated them were the first victims of the war. Hence Gregory was deeply moved to see their blood shed, and he claimed the honour of having implored peace.

He had in this, however, a collaborator in the good Catholic, the queen Theodelinda. To her, before all, he now wrote a gracious letter of thanks, in which he says: "We expected nothing less from Your Holiness ("Your Christianity"), and we thank Almighty God, who by His grace governs your heart. We beg Him also that, having given you the true faith, He will give you likewise the privilege of always doing His will. The bloodshed which is now spared deserves a recompense; may God give it to you! We salute you with paternal affection and we exhort you to influence your most excellent husband not to reject the friendship of the Christian Republic (*"christianæ reipublicæ societatem non rejiciat"*)."[31]

The king Agilulf would have liked to have Gregory append his signature to this treaty of peace, but Gregory refused. "We have been," he said, "merely petitioners and intermediaries (*petitores sumus et medii*) between the king and our most excellent son the Exarch." If either party fails to fulfil his engagements, Gregory does not wish to be himself suspected. At most he would allow the treaty to be signed by some bishop or

archdeacon of the Roman Church.[32] The Pope has no intention of usurping the political rôle of the Exarch. He is bishop of Rome, loyally devoted to the Republic, that is, to the emperor. This Christian Republic represents for him order and legitimacy, and he uses his influence to establish between it and the Lombards relations which can be truly called co-partnership (*societas*).

This was a wise policy, which Gregory preferred to the inflexible attitude only too much favoured by the emperor Mauricius ; it was indeed the only policy capable of serving at the same time the interests of both Italy and the universal Church, and of again bringing the Arian Lombards to Catholicism. Gregory was a pacifist and he gloried in the fact. "If," he writes, "I had wished to lend myself to the destruction of the Lombards, that nation would to-day have no longer either a king or dukes or counts and would be given over to irremediable confusion ; but, because I fear God, I did not wish to participate in the destruction of anyone whomsoever."[33]

[1] J. 1975, October 590.
[2] J. 1983, January 591.
[3] J. 1178, March 592.
[4] Before proceeding to the consecration, the Pope caused an inquiry to be made concerning the bishop-elect, and it sometimes happened that Gregory did not accept him. The inquiry was confided to the rector of the local Patrimony—as for example, the rector of Campania for the bishop-elect of Sorrento—or else to a trustworthy bishop (J. 1774–1782). At Rimini he made it known that

he did not wish that votes should be cast for a certain Ocleatinus, and if they had no suitable candidate, he would indicate one (J. 1125). At Syracuse, Gregory foresaw that the preference was for a priest named Trajanus, who did not appear to him a suitable person for the position. "*Si autem mea voluntas ad hanc electionem quæritur, tibi secreto indico quod volo,*" and the Pope's candidate was John, archbishop of Catania (J. 1339). It was this John whom the Pope subsequently succeeded in making bishop of Syracuse.

[5] The work concerning the ecclesiastical legislation of monasteries by Dudden, II, 173–194, should be read. The Roman synod of the year 691 is a forgery. The rights of the bishop consisted in authorizing the foundation of the monasteries, in confirming the election of the abbot chosen by the community, in providing for the celebration of the Mass in the oratory of the monastery, in visiting the monastery, and in intervening in case of disorders or scandals. The bishop had no right over temporal matters. It happened constantly that the autonomy of the monasteries in both spiritual and temporal affairs was menaced by the despotism of the bishop. It is this despotism that Gregory endeavoured to restrain. He himself intervened only when the monastery appealed to him to do so, and then he upheld the monastic privileges, as in the case of Rimini, which is quite to the point (J. 1362). By way of compensation, the monastery was to be self-supporting. The monks, although tonsured, were not strictly speaking clerics. They had a chaplain, who celebrated Mass (J. 1422), and we know that, according to the rule of Saint Benedict, the monks confessed their secret faults to the abbot or to a *spiritalis senior*. The monks were not allowed to go out of the monastery, and we do not hear of their occupying themselves with preaching (Dialog. I, 4). In a word, they were cloistered monks, and the monastery was a place of retreat, to which the clerics, priests, and bishops condemned to do penance were sent for that purpose. Gregory was not unaware, however, of the beneficent influence of really edifying monasteries. Accordingly, he endeavoured to establish one in Corsica, "quatenus insula ipsa, quæ

monasterium nunc usque non habuit, etiam hujus conversationis via meliorari debeat" (J. 1120). Of course these monasteries were independent of one another. The protection which Gregory accorded to the suburban monasteries in the province of Rome against the despotism or neglect of the bishops was a prelude to complete exemption from their control and to their immediate dependency on Rome itself, but this revolutionary change was not the work of Gregory, who wished only that every abbot should have the right of recourse to Rome in the interest of his monastery.

[6] The bishop of Tarentum had caused a woman, who was inscribed on the roll of the poor of the Church (de matriculis), to be cudgelled. Gregory forbade him to say Mass for two months (J. 1249).

[7] J. 1894. The clergy of Reggio, who complained of their bishop, wanted him to be summoned to Rome. Gregory refused, but ordered the sub-deacon Savinus, who had charge of the Patrimony, to convoke five bishops at Reggio and to investigate the case on the spot, and afterwards to refer it to Rome (J. 1655).

[8] See the letter to Marinianus, bishop of Ravenna. Gregory accepts the resignation of the bishop of Rimini and orders that someone should be elected in his place, "quia cunctarum Ecclesiarum injuncta nos sollicitudinis cura constringit" (J. 1663).

[9] J. 1856, October–November 601.

[10] Gregory knew how to be considerate to his poor or infirm suffragans. Ecclesius, bishop of Chiusi, is ill. Gregory dispenses him from coming to Rome, and adds: "Unum caballum vobis qualem invenire potuimus de benedictione Sancti Petri transmissimus, ut habeatis cum quo post infirmitatem vectari possitis" (J. 1793, September 600).

[11] Gregory is, on principle, unyielding about the application of the imperial laws to heretics. See his letter to Pantaleon, prefect of Africa (J. 1304). It commences thus: "Hæreticorum nefandissimam pravitatem qualiter lex persequatur instantius, excellentiæ vestræ non habetur incognitum." He makes it for the prefect an affair of conscience to apply the law. However, when

Gregory believes it possible to bring the heretics back to the Church, the attitude of the Pope becomes entirely different. He writes to the bishop of Salona, who has with him some obstinate Photinians, to try to convert them. "If they will come to me," he says, "and listen to reason, promise them that they shall suffer no violence from me, and that I will discuss with them. If they recognize the truth, they will rally to it; if they do not recognize it, I will send them away unharmed" (J. 1784, July, 600). Unlike the heretics, the Jews, protected by the laws, are defended by the Pope, both themselves and their synagogues, as at Naples, Palermo, Cagliari, and Marseilles. Gregory preserved the Occident of the Middle Ages from antisemitism. See Grisar, 342–347.

[12] J. 1199, July 23, 592.

[13] J. 1398, October 595.

[14] The pallium was certainly the insignium of the Greek bishops at the end of the fourth century. At the beginning of the sixth century, in the Occident, it was worn by the Pope only. Saint Cæsarius of Arles was the first bishop to whom a Pope gave it. Schubert, 45. Concerning the pallium see P. Batiffol, *Etudes de liturgie et d'archéologie*, 1919, 57–71.

[15] J. 1234, April 593.

[16] J. 1233, same time.

[17] J. 1272, September 593.

[18] J. 1779, May 600.

[19] J. 1084, January 591.

[20] Duchesne, *Eglise VI siècle*, 245–248.

[21] J. 1275, September 593.

[22] J. 1349, May 595.

[23] J. 1507, April 598.

[24] J. 1722, July 599.

[25] J. 1288, December 593.

[26] J. 1459, November 596.

[27] J. 1469, June 597.

[28] J. 1413, April 596.

[29] J. 1414, April 596.

[30] J. 1591, November–December 598.

[31] J. 1592, same time.

[32] J. 1568, October 598. The text reads as follows:

"Si tantum est, gloriosum fratrem nostrum, vel de episcopis unum, aut certe archidiaconum subscribere faciemus." From this it has been inferred that Gregory had a brother, who had followed the profession of public functionary, as the title *gloriosus* suggests, but whose name we do not know.

[33] J. 1322, September–October 594.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIALOGUES

"ONE day, overwhelmed by the tiresome uproar of certain laymen, who in their business matters most frequently press us to pay what we are certain we do not owe, I took refuge in a secret place soothing to my tormented mind. I was there, afflicted and silent, when there suddenly appeared my very dear son, the deacon Peter, who ever since my earliest youth has been linked to me by an intimate friendship and is my companion in the profound study of the Holy Scriptures. On seeing me consumed with grief, he said to me: 'Has some new trial befallen you that you are sadder than usual?' I answered him: 'The sadness which I feel every day, is always old to me by reason of the suffering which it causes me, and always new through the increase of it which it gives me.'" Gregory then confessed to Peter the incurable longing he had for the monastic life, to which he had to say farewell when he became bishop. We have quoted elsewhere that touching page. "Often," he continued, "my grief is aggravated by my remembrance of some

who have abandoned the world with all their heart and soul, for I see the spiritual summit they have attained and compare with it the depth in which I lie!" Upon this, the deacon Peter confessed that he knew scarcely any holy persons in Italy who had done miracles. "That in this land (of Italy) there have been holy people I do not doubt, but I do not think that any one has seen any miracles performed by them, or else they have been so effectually buried in silence that we are ignorant of them."

Now the four books of Gregory's *Dialogues* are designed to teach the deacon Peter what he did not know.[1] From them we ourselves learn that Italy had not had up to that time any biographers of the saints, and that Gregory felt impelled to remedy this deficiency. In Italy there was no history of the saints,[2] and the martyrs themselves, as we know from Gregory, had only the Martyrology, ascribed to Saint Jerome (J. 1517). When Gregory, therefore, undertook the composition of the *Dialogues*, he first of all collected the souvenirs of the martyrs, which were then in oral circulation, but had not yet been written.[3]

There is extant a letter written by the Pope, in July 593, to his friend Maximianus, bishop of Syracuse. In this (J. 1255) he says:

"My brethren, who are the associates of my life, rival one another in urging me to write something short on what we know of the miracles wrought in Italy by the Fathers. For that I have great need

of the assistance of your love in recounting to me briefly the miracles which recur to your memory and which you have come to know. Of *domnus* Nonnosus the abbot, who was with *domnus* Anastasius of Pentomis, I recollect you told me something which I have forgotten. I ask you, therefore, to tell me about this and other things as well, if you know any, in a letter which you will send to me post-haste, if so be that you do not hasten to me yourself."

We see, therefore, by this letter that, in the summer of 593, Gregory was already collecting material for his *Dialogues*. A miracle, which he relates in them, occurred (he says) contemporaneously with the terrible inundation of the Tiber in November 589, "about five years ago," *ante hoc fere quinquennium* (III, 19), and we have in this statement a proof that Gregory completed the *Dialogues* in 594.

The title which these books then bore was *De miraculis Patrum italicorum*. Gregory, who could have extended his search outside of Italy, and would have found everywhere people to supply him with information,[4] wished to confine himself to that country only. The imperial provinces (the nomenclature of which Gregory faithfully preserved) in which the miracles related took place, were chiefly Campania, Umbria, Valeria, Tuscany, and Samnium. With only a few exceptions this part of Italy consisted of Rome and the territory adjacent to Rome.

The chronological area involved was equally limited. The souvenirs collected about Saint Benedict take us back to the first half of the sixth century. The oldest of the other memoranda, which can be dated, do not go back further than 510. This is the case with the abbot Æquitius in Valeria (1, 4), and with the magician Basil who, Gregory tells us, appeared at his monastery, dressed as a monk, at the time when some sorcerers (*malefici*) were discovered in the city of Rome.[5] We know from Cassiodorus that these prosecutions against the *malefici* took place in 510–511.[6] Most of these souvenirs belong to the two generations which precede 593; the first was designated by Gregory as "the time of the Goths," and more precisely "the time of Totila, king of the Goths"; the second was called "our time."

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Gregory, since he had no written sources to draw from, was obliged to collect testimony to these statements. Thus we have seen him soliciting that of Maximianus, bishop of Syracuse, who assuredly was not the only one he appealed to. He wrote in one place: "Felix bishop of Porto, from whose report I take this recital." And again: "I will not keep silent about what I have learned from the venerable Venantius, bishop of Luni, who recounted it to me two days ago."

Moreover, Gregory paid no attention to the

quality of his witnesses. The humblest are quite as good as the most distinguished. Writing his chapter on Fortunatus, the saintly bishop of Todi, he says: "I cannot pass over in silence what I learned only about twelve days ago. A poor old man had been brought to me, and as the conversation of old men is always pleasant to me (*ut mihi senum collocutio esse semper amabilis solet*), I asked him with interest where he came from. He replied that he was from the city of Todi. I said to him at once: 'Father, did you ever know the bishop Fortunatus?' He answered: 'I knew him very well.' 'Tell me, I beg of you,' I said, 'whether you know of any miracle of his, and fulfil my desire by informing me what manner of man he was.' Then the old man said to me: 'He was very different from the men we see now. . . .'" A pretty, lifelike scene, which reveals to us the method of Gregory's investigation.

Each of the stories in the *Dialogues* has thus its voucher, and Gregory adheres strictly to this rule, thinking by this means to remove from his readers any temptation to doubt the truth of the miracle ("*ut dubitationis occasionem legentibus subtraham*," Prolog.). But the fact is, that the good faith of Gregory was so credulous, that some persons have lately doubted whether these *Dialogues* could be the work of such a well-balanced mind as his, and have thought they were attributed to him as the Life of Saint Martin was to Sulpicius Severus, or as the "*In gloria confessorum*" was accredited to

Gregory of Tours. But the most serious men of Gregory's time were so. The Pope Pelagius and other "very religious persons" had recounted in Gregory's presence the adventures of the hermit of Marsico in Campania (III, 16). The venerable Valentio, who was put at the head of the monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, did not doubt that two of his monks of Valeria had chanted the Psalms after having been effectually hanged by the Lombards on one and the same tree (IV, 121).

The time was still far distant when preachers, requested to answer the question why miracles were no more seen, replied that the miracles which had accredited the apostolic preaching, had been necessary then, but had been sufficient.[7] The cult of the martyrs had come, and around their tombs and relics miracles had revived. Saint Augustine in his *City of God* had been able to say, like Gregory: "To their lifeless remains, the living who are sick come and are healed; perjurers come and are denounced by the devil; demoniacs come and are freed of their evil spirits; lepers come and are made clean; and the dead are brought and are restored to life" (IV, 6). The tombs of the martyrs were now no longer the only agencies for working miracles; the saints themselves wrought them—living saints, saints in flesh and bone, and their miracles were the proof of their sanctity.

In the city of Todi, a man was living with his two sisters. His name was Marcellus, and he led

a good life. He died on the evening of Holy Saturday. His sisters hastened, weeping, to Fortunatus, bishop of Todi, and with loud cries began to supplicate him: "We know that your life is like that of the apostles; you cleanse the lepers, you restore sight to the blind; come and call back our dead brother to life!" The bishop refused to tempt God and dismissed the poor girls; but he was sad, and on Easter morning he went with two of his deacons to the home of the dead man and prayed beside the lifeless body. Then he gently called the dead man by name: "Brother Marcellus," he said; and the dead man, as if he had been sleeping quietly, opened his eyes (I, 10).

Such, thought Gregory, is the impetrative power of prayer with God possessed by the saints. But no less wisely did he think—and desired it not to be forgotten—that saints can be saints and yet perform no miracles. "The true value of life," he said, "is in works of virtue, not in miracles; and there are many saints who, though they do not work miracles, are just as good as those who do" (I, 12).

At Ferentino,[8] there was a priest named Amantius, characterized by great simplicity, who, after the manner of the apostles, used to lay his hands on the sick and cure them. "I wished myself to see a man of such great virtue," writes Gregory, "and had him brought to me. I wanted him to remain a few days in the nursing-room

(*in infirmorum domo*) where one could quickly verify whether he had the grace of healing." Accordingly, he came, accompanied by his bishop, Floridus. And in fact he effected by prayer alone the recovery of one sick patient who was "what the doctors call by a Greek word *crazy*" (III, 35). The intervention of prayer and recourse to the all-powerful and helpful God was for Saint Gregory the moral meaning of the miracle, in conformity to the Gospel precept: Ask and you shall receive. And note another conformity: Amantius healed after the manner of the apostles. God does not operate to-day otherwise than he operated by the hands of the prophets and apostles. He raises the dead, he heals the deaf, the blind, and those possessed of devils; and he multiplies the loaves of bread in the oven and the oil and wine in the presses. But God does operate and operates every day, and the deacon Peter, on hearing these recitals of Gregory, could say: "We affirm that every day the word of truth is fulfilled: 'My Father worketh until now, and I work'" (*Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor*) (I, 7). Gregory found a reason for not being astonished at such wonders in the thought that the end of the world was at hand. He believed that men were standing on the threshold of the future world and that the miracles which were becoming ever more striking, were its forerunners (IV, 41).[9]

Saint Gregory must have learned from Saint Augustine that the prayers of the Church, the

"saving sacrifice" and deeds of charity are a source of help which we can obtain for the dead.[10]

He had had at *Clivus Scauri* a monk named Justus who knew something of medicine ("*medicinali arte fuerat imbutus*"), and who treated him in the continual lapses of his health. "He died three years ago," writes Gregory. This Justus had a brother, named Copiosus, who at that time earned his livelihood at Rome by practising the art of medicine. In his last moments Justus confessed to his brother that he had kept concealed three gold pieces (*tres aurei*), and the monks who attended him discovered these hidden gold coins. What should they do? The rule of the monastery was inflexible, and the brothers held everything in common and were not to possess any private property. It was necessary to make an example. Gregory, therefore, sent for the prior (*præpositus*), and commanded that no one should say another word to the dying man; that, when he should be dead, he should be buried by himself apart from the cemetery of the community; and that the three pieces of gold should be thrown into the grave. Justus comprehended by the silence of all the brothers the lesson that was being given him and died of sadness. The community comprehended it still better. "Thirty days later," writes Gregory, "I was seized with compassion for the deceased monk, thought with pain of the punishments which were his chastisement,

and sought some means of remedying the situation. I sent again for the prior and said to him : ' The dead brother is in the fire of punishment, and we owe him some charity, and as far as we can, it is our duty to aid in his redemption. Go therefore and, for the next thirty consecutive days, offer up for him the Mass, and let not a day pass without the saving host being immolated for his deliverance.' The prior did what we had commanded. We had then other things to think of, and had not counted the days, when one night the dead man appeared in a vision to his brother Copiosus, who asked him : ' What is it, brother ? How are you ? ' He replied : ' Hitherto it has gone badly with me, but now I am at peace, for to-day I received holy communion.' Copiosus informed the monastery of this immediately and the brothers reckoned without difficulty that on that day the sacrificial offering had been celebrated for the thirtieth time. The agreement was too evident for anyone to doubt that the dead monk had been freed from punishment by the saving host " (IV, 55).

From this story, which is famous, the following conclusion can be also drawn : Gregory believed in visions, and that God makes use of dreams in order to instruct us. This was no novelty, since Saints Peter and Paul had had dreams, by means of which God revealed to them his plans. Nevertheless, Gregory does not conceal the fact that these dreams may be an illusion of our senses in

sleep. He says: "It is necessary to believe in them with great caution, since it is not always plain from what source they come." He has one criterion: "The saints," he says, "distinguish illusions from revelations by a certain taste that they impart" ("*quodam intimo sapore*")! Gregory at least wishes us to be on our guard, for there is certainly a danger incurred by the mind which lacks prudence in these matters ("*si erga hæc mens cauta non fuerit*," IV, 48).

* * * * *

All reservations being made concerning the criticism bestowed on Saint Gregory, let us take the *Dialogues* for what they are, namely, a popular book, and intentionally popular. Gregory must have had the experience that, in the sermons he preached to his people, his hearers enjoyed more than anything else the edifying stories with which he interlarded them. He knew that "examples, more than exhortations, kindle in our hearts the love of the heavenly country" (Prolog.).

Then, the times were hard, very hard. The Lombards, who were at that time the masters of Italy, were Arians and pagans. Had God then abandoned the faithful of Holy Church? Gregory found in the miracles which he collected the proof that God was still with his people, always present, always helpful.[11] The deacon Peter remarks: "We are in great tribulations,

but the astonishing miracles of which you inform me, sufficiently testify that we are not forsaken by our Creator" (III, 30). The *Dialogues* were "*The City of God*" re-written for the simple.

They inculcated in the simple the faith of the simple, and taught that simplicity is nearer to sanctity than science is. Gregory assuredly did not despise science, for example the science of Paschasius, "deacon of this apostolic See, whose books of healthful and rich doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit remain with us; a man of wonderful holiness, very charitable, and full of love for the poor and contempt of himself," but who had the misfortune, at the time of Pope Symmachus, to belong to the faction of his competitor Laurentius (IV, 40). I would not dare to affirm that Gregory did not rank the ignorance of the priest Sanctulus of Nursia, who scarcely knew how to read, higher than the teaching of Paschasius. "He was," he says, "ignorant of the precepts of the Law, but he knew that charity is the fulfilment of the Law, according to Saint Paul." What he had not learned outwardly by study, he lived inwardly in love ("*quod foris in cognitione non noverat, intus vivebat in amore*"). *We* talk of virtue, but *he* practised it. Let us compare, if you please, that wise ignorance of his with our ignorant science![12] This is a reminder of Saint Augustine[13] who was of service to Gregory in exalting the noble dignity of the simple:

"*Comparemus, si placet, cum hac nostra indocta scientia illius doctam ignorantiam*" (III, 37).

According to the deacon Peter, there were found at that time in the very bosom of the Holy Church numbers of people who doubted whether there was a life for the soul after the death of the body (III, 38). The fourth book of the *Dialogues* is consecrated to the other life. Gregory treats there of eternity, the punishment of hell, the location of hell, and the nature of the fire which there devours sinners. Gregory had learned from Saint Augustine[14] that for certain sinners this punishment is temporary and this fire purgatory.

About heaven, Gregory is very reserved, although he is convinced that "sometimes souls, at the moment of death, are able to enjoy in advance the heavenly mysteries (*mysteria cælestia prælibare*), not in a dream, but while wide-awake" (IV, 26).

Death is the topic preferred by Gregory. He does not hesitate to describe the death of the reprobate, and cruel indeed is the story of the death of the five-year-old child, "who had been accustomed to blaspheme the majesty of God," and who expired in his father's arms, crying out: "Father, stop them! Stop them, father!" for he beheld some Moors (devils) who wanted to carry him away (IV, 18). This fearful story is not the only one which was to haunt for centuries the popular imagination. But Gregory has also consoling stories. More than any other, perhaps,

he encouraged the faithful to believe in a happy death, and the *Dialogues* softened and beautified death, and there are described in them death-scenes which have an irresistible charm.[15]

At the time he entered the monastery, an old woman, Redempta, who had been a disciple of the hermit Herundo of the mountain of Palestrina, was established, as a nun, at Rome near the church of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and had with her two disciples, one Romula, the other a woman whom the Pope knew by sight but whose name he had forgotten. Romula, smitten with paralysis, was confined to her bed for years, and her infirmity developed all the virtues. One night she called: "Mother, come! Mother, come!" Redempta hastened to her with her companion. It was midnight and, as they stood around her bed, a heavenly light filled the room, a great commotion was heard, as if a multitude was entering, and an odour of penetrating sweetness was perceived. Meanwhile, Romula comforted her mother superior and her companion: "Do not fear, mother, I shall not yet die," she said, and in fact still survived for three days. On the night of the fourth day she asked for and received the viaticum. "And suddenly, in the space before the door of the *cellula*, there stood two choirs who were chanting psalms, and one could distinguish by their voices the men chanting the psalm and the women singing the refrain. While, before the door of the cell, the celestial obsequies

were being celebrated thus, the saintly soul of the sick woman was released from her body, and she was taken up to heaven; and as the choirs mounted still higher, the music became even sweeter, until the chanting died away in the distance and with it the sweetness of the perfume disappeared" (IV, 15).

We stand here at one of the vital sources of the *Golden Legend*. In these narratives, in which fiction evokes all that we hope for from the other world, the poetry of the invisible takes its rise. It is literally Christian supernaturalism. We may add also that such a recital as this possesses already a finished perfection, without any effort on Gregory's part to make it so. We will speak no more of narratives connected with death, but refer to the wonderfully clever, though simple, story of the hermit Florentius and his bear (III, 15), which might have been a cousin to the bear of Saint Martin;[16] or the legend of Paulinus, bishop of Nola, who sold himself as a slave in Africa, in order to ransom a prisoner of the Vandals (III, 1), a story permeated with genuine emotion; or the incident of the priest Sanctulus, offering his head as indemnity for a runaway deacon (III, 37), a little masterpiece of dramatic power and intellectual perception, which we prefer even to the otherwise celebrated and beautiful account of the last interview between Saint Benedict and his sister.

* * * * *

In fact, as is well known, one entire book of the *Dialogues* (the second) is consecrated to Saint Benedict. For, of all the figures of bishops, monks, and saints of the mystical Italy of the sixth century, Saint Benedict is the one which most attracted the devotion of Saint Gregory. He loved him no doubt, first of all, for his monastic rule. Other founders of monasteries had made rules for their monks, and Gregory esteemed very highly Honoratus, who had been the "father" of the great monastery of Fondi, but the disciple of no one: "The gift of the Holy Spirit," he said, "is not confined to a law, and Saint John the Baptist had no master" (I, 1). It is true, the rule of Saint Benedict at the end of the sixth century was not adopted everywhere, perhaps not even on the *Clivus Scauri*, whatever may be said. But Gregory was acquainted with it. "I do not wish," he said to the deacon Peter, "that you should be ignorant of the fact that this man of God, besides the many miracles which have made him famous in the world, was no less illustrious by reason of his teaching; for he is the author of a rule for monks, remarkable for its spirit of discretion and written with perfect clearness (*monachorum regulam discretione præcipuam, sermone luculentam*)."

Gregory adds: "If anyone wishes to know the character and life of Benedict thoroughly, he will find in the text of his rule all the marks of his authority, for the holy man could not teach any-

thing which he did not live" (II, 36). Gregory had, then, read the rule of Saint Benedict, and he, who knew better than anyone what a legislative document should be, admired its literary composition. He admired still more its spirit of discretion, that is to say, his perception of the possible, in contrast to the chimerical and excessive. He could not help discovering in it also an extraordinary resemblance to his own views, and he was pleased to find in it something better than a monastic rule, namely, Saint Benedict himself and his sanctity.

When Saint Benedict was dead, after the year 542, no one among his monks had undertaken to write his life. His rule was enough for them. In 589, his monks, driven from Monte Cassino by the Lombards, had taken refuge in Rome and had established themselves in a monastery near to the Lateran, from which they were not to return to Monte Cassino before the eighth century.[17] The Lateran had thus become, under Pope Pelagius II, a place of shelter for the Benedictine life and was destined to remain so for more than a century. It was there that Gregory collected the material for his biography of Saint Benedict. "I have not," he says, "known all his great deeds (*gesta*), but the little that I relate of them was given me by four of his disciples: Constantinus, a very venerable man, who succeeded him in the government of the monastery; Valentianus, who was for a long time at the head of the monastery

of the Lateran ; Simplicius, who was the third to govern the community after Benedict ; and finally Honoratus, who is at the head of the *cella* at Subiaco, in which Benedict first lived" (II, Prolog.). In 593, only fifty years separated Gregory from the death of Saint Benedict, and he had been able to interrogate some of the monks who had been trained by him, who had been his immediate disciples, and who still lived under the influence of his memory.

Gregory did not at first intend to write a biography of Saint Benedict, but only to edify us by a record of his sanctity and miracles. It seemed to him of little importance to inform us when Benedict came from Nursia to Rome to " devote himself to the liberal pursuit of letters," or when, abandoning his studies, he fled into solitude while still quite young ; or when he established himself at Subiaco and soon became a pastmaster of asceticism ; or when he left Subiaco for Monte Cassino. He does not even tell us in what year he died. But he does relate to us the miraculous features (*mirabilia*) of this life of the man of God, to the joy of the deacon Peter, who said to him : " Great, very great are the things you relate there, and they will serve for the edification of many ; but for me, the more of the miracles of this good man I drink in, the more thirsty I become" (" *miracula quo plus bibo, plus sitio* " II, 7).

These *gesta* of Saint Benedict are also largely traits of character. Gregory, who discerns them

and estimates their value with a very accurate judgement, will find that he has placed before us an admirable personality, serious, judicious, humble, and absorbed in God.[18] His encounter with Totila, which must be placed in the year 542, is a fine page of history. The Gothic king rode up to Monte Cassino, and the aged Benedict's prestige was so great that the king prostrated himself before him. Benedict raised him up and said to him: "Thou hast done much evil and thou art still doing much harm; henceforth, make an end of thy iniquity. Thou shalt enter Rome; thou shalt cross over the sea; ten years shalt thou reign, and in ten years thou shalt die." For Benedict was a prophet. To the bishop of Canossa, who was terrified at the thought that Totila would enter Rome (the event took place in 546), the man of God said: "Rome will not be utterly destroyed by the barbarians, but she will be sorely tried by tempests, lightning, and earthquakes, and she will waste away from within (*marcescet in semetipsa*)." Gregory thought that he saw this prophecy being fulfilled under his own eyes, as the walls of Rome crumbled, her churches were destroyed by tempests, and her buildings became enfeebled by old age ("*ædificia longo senio lassata*," II, 15).

But Providence was to prove Saint Benedict's prophecy and Gregory's presentiment false. Rome was not about to die of age or to be buried beneath her ruins, together with the world itself. The monastic system which regulated itself under the

rule of Saint Benedict—in spite of lapses from that rule—renewed itself with the fertility of spring, and the retreat of the monks from Monte Cassino to the Lateran united them still more closely with the apostolic See. But there is no doubt that Book II of the *Dialogues* made of Saint Benedict the patriarch of the Monks of the West.

[1] U. Moricca, *Gregorii Magni Dialogi libri IV* (1924), in the *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, published by the Italian Historical Institute of Rome. It has a good introduction, but the establishment of the text, although it contributes useful corrections, has, we think, nothing definitive.

[2] H. Delehaye, *Origines du culte des martyres* (1912), 300, speaks of the " compact bundle of Roman legends, the greater part of which were written in the sixth century . . . as devoid of any value from the point of view of the history which they pretend to make known."

[3] The idea of putting a narrative in the form of a dialogue must have been suggested to him by the precedent of the *Life of Saint Martin* by Sulpicius Severus, or by the *Conferences* of Cassian. He does not, however, cite either of these two authors who were much read in his time.

[4] A proof of this is what he relates of Hermenigild, from what many people who had come from Spain had told him (III, 31). Gregory's narrative about Hermenigild is not without difficulties. See Duchesne, *Eglise VI siècle*, 572–574.

[5] Gregory knows the end of this Basil. He reappeared at Rome, where he was burned alive by the people: " Non post longum tempus in hac romana urbe, exardescente zelo Christiani populi, igne crematus est " (*Ibid.*). The *malefici* were numerous, and people resorted to them, but feared them even more, and the Church saw in them associates of the devil. *Dialog.* I, 10. See the letter of Gregory encouraging prosecutions in Rome against certain

wizards and fortune-tellers ("*quosdam incantatores atque sortilegos*") (J. 1731).

[6] Moricca, xlix.

[7] H. Delehaye, *Saint Martin et Sulpice Sévère* (1920), 73. It must not be forgotten also that Saint Athanasius had written the *Life of Saint Antony* which quickly became so popular in the Occident.

[8] We read, with Moricca, "Ferentino" instead of Tibur.

[9] Père Delehaye, 77, points out that for Gregory the miracles of his time were in some way "second-rate" ones. Thus he can elsewhere speak of the rarity of miracles, and bring forward again the classic argument that the nascent faith needed a support which thenceforth was no longer necessary. *Moral.*, XXVII, 18. *Homil. in Evang.*, XXIX.

[10] Augustine, *Sermo*, CLXII, 2–3. Enchiridion, XVIII, 69. P. Lejay, *Césaire d'Arles* (1906), 148. "The doctrine of purgatory is particularly prominent in the sermons of Cæsarius. He found it, already made, in Saint Augustine."

[11] See the pretty letter to Dominica, wife of a distinguished man (vir gloriosus), John. She had returned to the unity of the faith. Gregory points out to her that she ought to have considered what a multitude of the faithful there was in the bosom of the Church, "quantisque virtutibus sacerdotes qui in ista fide defuncti sunt coruscarunt, vel quanta ad corpora sua miracula faciant, atque eos nos non dijudicare, sed plus tantis viris ac sacerdotibus quam tibi credere debuisti." The *virtues* and *miracles* of the bishops of the Catholic Church are contrasted with the heretics (J. 1480). The absence of miracles among the Arians is the great argument of the Catholics. Schubert, 25.

[12] Gregory laid stress on this antithesis. He said of Saint Benedict when he abandoned the life of the world: "Recessit scienter nescius et sapienter indoctus" (*Dialog.*, II, Prolog.).

[13] P. Batiffol, *Catholicisme de Saint Augustin* (1920), 63.

[14] Augustine. *De Civit. Dei*, XXI, 16.

[15] See *Dialog*, IV., 10 (The death of the Abbot Spes), 11 (of the priest Nursinus), 12 (of bishop Probus), 13 (of

the nun Galla), 14 (of the layman Servulus), 16 (of the nun Tarsilla), 17 (of the virgin Musa), etc.

[16] P. Monceaux, *Saint Martin* (1926), 75.

[17] See the note of Moricca, 107.

[18] See Dom Ryelandt, *Essai sur la physionomie morale de Saint Benoît* (1924), 21–47. Dom Butler, *Le Monachisme bénédictin*, trad. franc. (1924), 172–175.

CHAPTER VII

SAINT GREGORY AND THE OCCIDENT

THE Occident, although separated from the Italian Christian Republic ("*respublica christiana*"), could not elude the anxious scrutiny of Gregory. We have seen the able policy which Gregory adopted towards the Lombards in Italy, with a view towards bringing them nearer to Catholicism and in particular to the Catholicism of Rome. We shall find this same policy pursued by him in Spain, France, and England in a struggle with new difficulties and fresh opportunities.

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Ever since the time of Justinian—to be exact, since 552—the Byzantine Empire had held the Spanish provinces of Carthagena and a part of Baetica, and was to maintain its conquest until the invasion of the Arabs. The rest of Spain, including Narbonensis, belonged to the kingdom of the Visigoths. The Suevian kingdom had been annexed by the Visigoths in 585. At first, therefore, Gregory was confronted in Spain by a Byzantine enclave. The government of this enclosed area was in the hands of a Byzantine

judge, Comitiolus by name, who ruled his dependencies despotically and unscrupulously. He caused, for example, Januarius, the bishop of Malaga, to be judged by some bishops who were entirely subservient to Comitiolus, and Januarius was deposed and replaced by a successor. Januarius appealed to Rome. Soon another bishop, Stephen, the name of whose see is not given but which no doubt belonged also to the same province, Baetica, likewise appealed from a sentence of deposition, obtained against him by the redoubtable Comitiolus. The Pope received the two appeals. He could have complained to Constantinople of the judge's despotism, but he saw, on the contrary, in this case an occasion to intervene directly in that Byzantine province of the extreme Occident and to ascertain the principal motives involved in these actions.

Foreseeing that the Byzantine judge would oppose this intervention, Gregory drew up a *capitulare*, or abstract of the laws of Justinian which could make such an intervention legitimate.[1] In these laws the Pope had found the statement that, if a layman brings an accusation against a bishop, he must lay the affair before the Metropolitan of the said bishop, who will judge "conformably to the holy canons and to the laws," and that, if there be a second hearing, it shall be taken to the "Archbishop or patriarch," who shall decide without appeal. Justinian by this ordinance sanctioned the Oriental canon law, and Gregory seems also to have sanctioned it in his

turn, since he invoked the imperial constitution of Justinian which proclaimed it. "If," he continued, "it be objected that the two bishops in litigation have neither a metropolitan nor a patriarch, it is all the more evident that their case comes under the competency of the apostolic See, which is the head of all churches" (*omnium ecclesiarum caput est*).

Gregory, therefore, sent to Spain a Roman *defensor*, by the name of John, who was to inquire into the affair on the spot and pronounce his decision, even if the sentence should consist of an excommunication for six months of the bishops compromised in the case of the two appellants, together with seclusion in a monastery to do penance there, not to mention the damages with interest to be imposed upon Comitiolus. We cannot say more of this affair, since we do not know the result. But the documents of the accusation which we possess, permit us at least to verify the authority which Gregory claims in the name of the holy canons and the imperial laws in this distant Byzantine province, which seems to have had no council of its own. The *defensor*, in fact, was not instructed to act in concert with a council; he alone was to decide and to execute the sentence, and he had full power to do so. A letter about the same time (J. 1913), shows this *defensor* as an envoy also to the island of Cabrera, near the island of Majorca, to reform a monastery, the report of whose disorders had reached Rome.

In this affair also Gregory did not ask the aid of anyone or the permission of any bishop, and did not hesitate to execute the mandate which he gave his envoy. It is clear that the direct action of the Pope in this part of the Empire was set in motion by causes which came under the jurisdiction of the apostolic See, and it was carried out in conformity to the holy canons and even to the imperial laws. In such cases as that of the monastery of Cabrera the Pope considered himself to be invested with the power to cut the scandal short on his own initiative (*motu proprio*) and to re-establish the regular order (*ordo canonicus*).

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The kingdom of the Visigoths had no intention of submitting to such an action on the part of the Pope, even if that kingdom had turned from Arianism to Catholicism. The king Leovigild had died in 586, and Saint Gregory assures us that this monarch, having become reconciled with Saint Leander, bishop of Seville, had called the latter to his death-bed and had recommended to him his son Reccared, who was about to succeed him (*Dialog.*, III, 31). The tenth month of the new régime had not ended, when Reccared had been converted to Catholicism (587). A great national Council, held at Toledo in 589, completed the Catholicizing of the kingdom.

Saint Gregory, informed by Saint Leander of the conversion of Reccared, testified his joy in a

letter to the bishop: "My words are powerless to express the satisfaction I feel, on learning that our common son, the glorious king Reccared is converted to the Catholic faith and displays a perfect spirit of devotion. Your letters, which tell me of his conduct, make me love one whom I do not know.[2]"

Rome had had nothing to do either with the king's conversion or with the Council of Toledo in 589. Reccared subsequently wrote to Saint Gregory: "When the Lord in his mercy withdrew us from the Arian heresy, and when the holy Catholic Church received us in her bosom, it was our wish to write to such a venerable man as yourself, who are the first of all bishops" ("*tam reverentissimum virum qui præ ceteros polles antistites.*")

Meanwhile, three years went by, and the king had not put his wish into execution. He sent to Rome, however, a deputation of three abbots from various monasteries, to offer presents to Saint Peter and to bring greetings to the Pope, but the rough sea which they encountered made them turn back. Then, a priest whom Gregory had sent to Malaga and whom the king had invited to come on to the Court, excused himself from accepting the invitation on account of his poor health. Nevertheless, Reccared sent him a chalice of gold ornamented with gems, as an offering to Saint Peter.[3]

The Pope replied to the king and expressed his

joy to know that the entire nation of the Goths was now converted from the Arian heresy. He thanks God for this, and takes his own share of credit for the act of the king, even if Rome had had nothing to do with it ("*etsi vobiscum nihil egimus.*") He thanks him also for the gift he has presented to Saint Peter, and in return sends him, as a form of benediction, a little key, taken from the tomb of Saint Peter. Within this little key is enclosed some of the iron of Saint Peter's fetters, "in order that this iron which chained the neck of the apostle on the day of his martyrdom, may free your neck from the burden of all sins." Gregory sends him also a cross, in which is some of the wood of the cross of our Lord, together with some of the hair of Saint John the Baptist. By the same messenger he sends to Leander, in the name of the See of the blessed apostle Peter, the pallium, "which we certainly owe to an ancient custom as well as to the character of the king and to the goodness and seriousness of the bishop."[4]

Communications between Rome and Visigoth Spain were not always easy. Thus the Pope excuses himself for the delay of his reply to Reccared because there was, for the moment, no ship leaving for Spanish ports. Moreover, the Spaniards were embroiled with the Byzantines, whose fleets were policing the Mediterranean. But that is not sufficient to explain why the apostolic See had so little to do with ecclesiastical affairs in Spain. The friendship which, ever since they

had become acquainted at Constantinople, united Leander to Gregory, formed a bond of union between Seville and Rome, and the personal authority of the bishop of Seville was exceptional, but the real head of the Church in Spain was the bishop of Toledo, the royal residence, who is not once named in the correspondence of Saint Gregory.

There is no doubt that the Council of 589 declared that " the constitution of all the Councils and the synodical letters of the holy bishops of Rome remain in force "[5] ; but it is not certain that any Spanish case was subsequently taken to Rome ; the Spanish Councils sufficed to settle lawsuits and to promulgate useful canons. These Councils assembled every year, at fixed dates, in the ecclesiastical provinces of Toledo, Seville, Merida, Braga, Tarragona, and Narbonne. " All the bishops of the province were required to be present at them or to send their representatives thither, and not only the bishops, but the State functionaries and the administrators of the royal domains. . . . The government frankly relied on the clergy, not only to promote in civil relations the fusion (of races) obtained in the domain of religion, but in general for the good administration of the country."[6]

At the national Council of 589, the king Reccared, the queen Badda, and a number of notable Goths and Suevians had appeared. The Church of Spain was not in the hands of the king as the

Church of the Orient was in the hands of the *basileus*, but governed itself in harmony with him. Saint Gregory did not take umbrage at this nationalism and placed full confidence in the Spanish bishops, since the Catholic communion itself was safe.

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Justinian had reconquered nothing in Gaul. In fact, it is from his time that the unification of Gaul in the hands of the Franks had its origin. In 534, the Franks had annexed to themselves the kingdom of the Burgundians, and, in 536, the Ostrogoth king of Ravenna, Vitigus, had abandoned to them Provence, conquered by Theodoric. The country of Narbonensis remained to the Visigoths of Spain. At the death of Clothaire, in 561, the kingdom of the Franks, hitherto undivided, had been distributed among his sons, who were then four in number, but were soon reduced to three. Of these one was the king of Burgundy at Chalons, another the king of Austrasia at Metz, and the third the king of Neustria at Soissons. The Rhine was no longer the frontier of Gaul. Austrasia passed beyond the Rhine and attached to itself the Germanic cantons of Hesse, Franconia, Thuringia, Allemania, and Bavaria.

The Franks had been Catholics since the baptism of Clovis (496). On account of this fact they were not simply living in juxtaposition with the Roman population, they *incorporated themselves with the*

Romans and penetrated into their society only too easily with their rustic manners. Even the clergy did not escape deterioration, and simony there was now endemic and peopled the land with wretched bishops, of whom Gregory of Tours gives us an idea. These bishops naturally supported the established régime, since the bishoprics were filled by the nominations of the king. The Frank kings, on their side, left to the Church the care of governing itself, with the exception of the elections of the bishops. They convoked or authorized the Councils, but did not appear in them.

The parcelling out of the kingdom among several kings was not done in order to promote an ecclesiastical centralization, like that of Spain about Toledo. There were bishops of Neustria, of Austrasia, of Burgundy, and of Aquitania. Burgundy, the kingdom of Gontran, had tried, a little before the reign of Saint Gregory, to constitute, over the head of the bishop of Lyons, a primacy of the Gauls; and, at the great Council of Mâcon, in 585, where sixty episcopal Sees were represented, the president, Priscus, metropolitan of Lyons, assumed the title of Patriarch, and caused it to be decreed that the national Council should thenceforth assemble every three years at a place which the bishop of Lyons, in agreement with the king, should appoint.[7] But the patriarchate of Lyons was as short-lived as the periodical national Council.

The direct action of the apostolic See in Gaul,

when Gregory became Pope, was exercised practically nowhere except in the territory of Provence. The potent memory of Saint Cæsarius of Arles (502–543) profoundly influenced this tradition. Moreover, between Provence and Rome, intercourse by way of Marseilles was easy and of daily occurrence; the least incident, transpiring there, was reported at Rome. One example, out of many, enlightens us on this point. We have a letter from Gregory to Virgilius, bishop of Arles, in which the Pope laments that Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, admits into his society persons of doubtful character, and notably a bad priest. The Pope ordered the bishop of Arles to make an inquiry and to call both the bishop and the priest to order (J. 1828). It was only in Provence that the Pope could intervene in this way in Gaul.

The Patrimony of Saint Peter in Provence was also a connecting link between that state and Rome.

There existed no Patrimony in Gaul outside of Provence, and this one was not large. Gregory speaks of it as a little property (*dominiolum*). Yet this domain at least put the Pope in connection with the royal authority, for we are surprised to learn that Gregory asked the king to interest himself in the administration of the Patrimony and royal functionaries on several occasions were occupied with this administration.[8]

Childebert, king of Austrasia, inherited Burgundy in 593, as his father had inherited Aquitania in

567. To him the primacy of the bishop of Lyons, which had been an idea of King Gontran, perhaps appeared chimerical; at all events, Childebert was easily persuaded to restore the title of Vicar, formerly conferred by the apostolic See upon the bishops of Arles,[9] and wrote on the subject to Saint Gregory. The Pope received his proposals favourably, glad of the opportunity to extend his influence in the kingdom of the Franks and too clever not to profit by it. He replied to the king as follows:[10]

"The letter of your Excellency has brought us great joy, by showing to us your ardent and pious solicitude for the honour and dignity of the episcopate. You exhibit to all your fidelity to the worship of God, by loving his bishops with the grateful reverence which is due to them, and by promoting with Christian devotion all that concerns their interests. Hence, we have received with gratitude what you have written and willingly granted you what you desired. On our brother, Virgilius, bishop of Arles, we therefore, at your request, confer the privilege of being our Vicar in accordance with ancient custom and with the aid of God. We grant him also the use of the pallium, as ancient custom requires."

In return for the satisfaction he has thus given to the royal desire, Gregory solicits two things of Childebert. The Pope has learned that laymen are elevated to the episcopate, as it were, at a bound (*præcipiti saltu*), without having passed

through the previous degrees of the holy orders. He has heard also that holy orders of all degrees are conferred for money. He therefore begs the king, for the sake of his soul's salvation, to stop at once such detestable abuses. He is sure that the bishop of Arles, to whom he has given all necessary instructions, will find in the king an efficacious supporter of this reform, and that the canons, which Pope Pelagius II, his predecessor, caused to be observed in the glorious reign of King Sigebert, father of Childebert, will again be put in force, thanks to the king's devotion. "We have," he continues, "granted your desire without delay, and so you must cause my orders (*statuta*) to be respected, in every particular, for the glory of God and the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles."

Gregory's vigilance kept him well and duly informed of the disorders which were disgracing the Frank episcopate. "*Pervenit ad nos*" . . . "*Nobis est nuntiatum*"[11] . . . are words often used by him. He had been patient, he had waited for a favourable opportunity, for his prudence knew how to temporize, and it was necessary to handle the king gently, for his government was without doubt itself an accomplice in the choice of bishops and in simony. But the conduct of Childebert gave Gregory occasion to call back, with the most tactful suavity, the king of the Franks to the discipline of the holy and universal Church.

Gregory wrote to Virgilius, bishop of Arles, a

letter in which he denounced the two abuses he had pointed out to the king. The Pope then defined the vicariate of Arles, the jurisdiction of which was to extend " to the churches which form part of the kingdom of our most eminent son, Childebert," while the inherent dignity of the metropolitans was to remain assured. If any difficult case should present itself concerning the faith or other important matters, the bishop of Arles was to convoke twelve bishops to judge it, and if they should be unable to pronounce a decision, it was to be brought to Rome (" *ad nostrum judicium referatur.*" J. 1374). Such had been formerly the rule in the vicariate of Thessalonica. Here, however, Gregory softens its rigour somewhat and treats with tact the susceptibilities of the bishops, who have become unaccustomed to travel to Rome.[12]

On the same day, still another letter was addressed by the Pope " to all the bishops of Gaul who were in the kingdom of Childebert," to inform them of the reëstablishment of the vicariate of Arles. In this letter Gregory indicates when an appeal would have to be made to Rome, for example, in a dispute about an article of faith or in some other difficult affair, and he presupposes that such a case will be exceptional, and does not doubt that Rome can pronounce a decision concerning it without the right of appeal (" *quatenus a nobis valeat congrua sine dubio sententia terminari causa* ").[13]

Had Gregory, in restoring the vicariate of Arles, the intention of eliminating the patriarchate of Lyons? Nothing informs us of any such purpose. Rome saw in the vicariate an ancient authority thoroughly devoted to the Church, which would work for the reform of the Frank episcopate and perhaps for the ecclesiastical organization of a Germany tributary to Austrasia. In his letter to Virgilius of Arles, Gregory, in fact, mentions Germany and distinguishes it from Gaul.

Childebert, who was then twenty-five years old, died in the following year, leaving to succeed him two illegitimate sons of a tender age, Theodebert and Thierry. The former received Austrasia, the latter Burgundy, as their respective realms, but the actual government remained in the hands of their grandmother, Brunhilde. Saint Gregory, in the first letter which he wrote to this regent, in September 595 (J. 1384), praises her for her "goodness," which, he says, is proved by her government of the kingdom and also by the education she had given her son Childebert. On her side, Brunhilde was clever and respectful to the Pope. She asked him for a book, which was to take Gregory on his weak side, and he hastened to send it to her. In return, she gave a most amiable reception to Augustine, on his way to England, which for many reasons touched Gregory deeply. He was grateful to her also for the respect she showed to the bishops, and therefore—although rather unwillingly—he could not refuse her the

pallium which she had asked for Syagrius, bishop of Autun. But, for his part, he relied on her, and especially on her "*christianitas*," to banish simony, to forbid the elevation to the episcopate of laymen who had had no preparation for it, and to extirpate what remained of the old paganism in the kingdom by reason of the conduct of Christians who had not renounced the worship of demons.[14] He knows well with what steadfastness the queen's piety is founded on the fear of God (J. 1491).

Some people have been scandalized by the terms of honour in which Gregory addresses Brunhilde. But in reality this sort of language was the style of that day, and the Pope, when writing to a queen of the Franks, could scarcely use any other. Moreover, the qualities which he eulogizes in her were actually there. "She was in love with Roman culture, she encouraged the arts, built churches, made roads, restored monuments, and used all her power to impose upon a semi-barbarous nation the institutions of the Roman Empire; hence she could well appear as the hope of civilization and religion among the Franks." She was, moreover, a good Catholic and even "pious"; and, finally, the most odious of her crimes—political crimes—were committed after the death of Saint Gregory.[15] The Pope was right in appealing to the good qualities of this terrible woman and in remaining reticent in regard to her acts of violence, of which perhaps he did not know.

As the restoration of the vicariate of Arles did

not produce the expected results, Saint Gregory resolved to call a great Council of the bishops of the kingdom, and chose for this business Cyriacus, the abbot of his monastery on *Clivus Scauri*, whom he sent to Autun. It was the year 599.

Gregory thought that he was sure of Syagrius of Autun, to whom he had just granted the pallium at the request of Brunhilde, and who could not fail to be in favour at the Court. He wrote, therefore, to Syagrius, and at the same time to Ætherius, bishop of Lyons, to Desiderius, bishop of Vienne (in Gaul), and to Virgilius, bishop of Arles. He exposed to them the abuses which were ravaging France, open or concealed simony, laymen raised to the episcopate without preparation, and Councils fallen into desuetude, when they ought to be held twice a year. "We desire," writes Gregory, "that a general Council be held to reëstablish the observance of the canons," and he does not doubt that Cyriacus will bring back to him a statement from Syagrius and the whole Council which will inform him that his wishes have been fulfilled.[16]

The Pope expressed his will thus unequivocally and strongly, and the sending of the abbot of *Clivus Scauri* was significant. Without being, strictly speaking, a papal legate, Cyriacus would nevertheless be present at the Council, and, as the presidency of the assembly was given to Syagrius, the Pope considered the matter virtually settled: "*We have decreed*" (*decrevimus*), he wrote to

Brunhilde.[17] Simultaneously he wrote in the same sense to the two young kings, Thierry and Theodebert: "If you wish to offer a great gift to God, order the Council to assemble" (*synodum congregari præcipite*).[18] He felt sure that the royal consent would be obtained, but time passed and the Council was not convoked.

Yet Gregory was not discouraged. He wrote to Thierry in regard to Burgundy, to Theodebert in regard to Austrasia, and to Clothaire II in regard to Neustria. Always urgent, yet always respectful, he reiterated to the three kings the words: "Order the synod to assemble" (*Congregari synodum jubeatis*). He wrote to Brunhilde:

"All the blessings which the divine munificence has conferred upon you and all the gifts with which grace from on high has so richly endowed you, together with all your incontestable merits, are manifest to all, especially in the way in which you govern the savage hearts of the nations subject to you (*effera corda gentilium*) by means of your foresight and—something still more meritorious—by the fact that you adorn your royal power with wisdom; and while you are superior in that respect to many other nations, you surpass them also by the sincerity of your faith. That is why we have great confidence in you for the correction of disorders."[19]

In another letter Gregory proposed to Brunhilde that he should send someone from Rome, as he had lately sent Cyriacus, to consult with the

bishops and to plan out the reform ("*Personam, si præcipitis, cum vestræ auctoritatis assensu 'transmittamus'*").[20] By the words "*cum vestræ auctoritatis assensu*" the Pope makes the sending of his envoy dependent on the royal authority, knowing perhaps that she is suspicious in such matters, and being firmly resolved to undertake nothing in behalf of a reform in the kingdom, unless in agreement with royal authority. The envoy whom Gregory has in mind is Augustine, the apostle to England (J. 1836).

Brunhilde, for her part, had need of the Pope. She was negotiating at that moment with the *basileus* at Constantinople a treaty of peace, perhaps of alliance, and she knew that the Pope could be of great assistance to her in this affair. She therefore sent to Rome two of her illustrious men (*viri illustres*), Burgoaldus and Varmaricarius, to confer with Gregory about it. She agreed that the Pope might send to Gaul someone who, "when the Council had assembled, could correct all that is being done against the holy canons." Gregory takes note of this at once and promises that, at the time that shall be agreed upon, he will not fail to conform to what he calls the "revered wishes" of the queen. "God forbid," he says, "that, under a reign in which you do so many pious and religious things, you should permit anything contrary to ecclesiastical law!" As for the rest, "with the help of God we desire to do with absolute devotion[21] everything possible and

everything useful with a view to conclude a peace between you and the Republic." We know indeed with what constancy Gregory had laboured to procure a durable peace between the Lombards and the Republic, and now a good peace between the Republic and the Franks would consolidate the peace in Italy. A policy was outlined, whereby the Pope should serve as mediator between the Republic and the new kingdoms of the barbarians, in order to insure peace in the Occident.

Gregory eagerly encouraged Brunhilde in this line of conduct, and wrote at the same time to the young king Thierry, as follows: "We praise you for your wise watchfulness, which the present time requires, and for your preparation for the future in concluding a perpetual peace with the Republic, so that, by this close union, the solidity of your kingdom may be beneficially strengthened for ever." [22] All this shows profound sagacity on the part of the Pope, who perceives intuitively the great future of the kingdom of the Franks, and who, to make it more certain, suggests a treaty of perpetual peace between this newly born kingdom and the old Republic of the *basileus*.

This remarkable programme of reform and peace is certainly one of the projects which do most honour to Saint Gregory.

And yet the unity which Gregory desired for the Franks ("*unum facti*") he was not destined to see. When Brunhilde and her descendants had disappeared, and when the son of Chilperic and

Fredegonde, Clothaire II, had united all the Frank kingdoms under his sceptre (613), then only was a great national Council possible, that of Paris in 614.[23] Its canons agreed admirably with Saint Gregory's programme, but the apostolic See remained silent there, and this great Council was adjourned *sine die*, the Merovingian episcopate being incapable of imposing the reform which Gregory had intended to suggest to it. The rule which had been observed since the time of Clovis, and which required the intervention of the sovereign in the election of bishops, continued in force ; and thus the Merovingian kings kept their supremacy over the episcopate of the kingdom. It was necessary to wait for other times and another dynasty in order to reunite it to Rome.

* * * * *

At the Council of Arles, in 314, there were counted three bishops from Great Britain (from London, York, and Lincoln), who suggested the formation of a more numerous hierarchy and of a regularly constituted British Church. At the time of the controversies for and against Pelagius, Saint Germanus of Auxerre was sent twice to Britain (429 and 447) to combat Pelegianism there, and this fact again supposes the existence of a church in communion with the Gallico-Roman episcopate and with Rome itself. Ireland was conquered for Christianity, in the fifth century, by Saint Patrick, a Briton, but a Briton who had

travelled through Gaul and Italy. That these Celtic groups of Christians had their individual peculiarities cannot be doubted, but, for all that, one cannot attribute to them a schismatical (non-conformist) Catholicism, or make of them a Church having no relations with Rome.[24]

The first Anglo-Saxons had established themselves in Great Britain in 428. They were barbarians and pagans, and, having taken possession of the country, they remained pagans.

In the autumn of 595, Saint Gregory, having confided the administration of the Patrimony of Saint Peter in Gaul to the Roman priest, Candidus, ordered him to take enough from the revenues of that Patrimony to purchase some English youths, seventeen or eighteen years old, who were captives and slaves, in order to put them into monasteries, where they should be trained for the service of God. " And as those who are found for sale there are pagans, a priest must be sent with them, in order that, if any of them fall ill on the way, this priest can baptize them before they die."[25] It can be inferred from this that a traffic in English slaves went on in the market of Marseilles, and it is supposed—though this is less certain—that Gregory wanted to have those whom he ordered to be purchased, brought up at Rome, with the ulterior design of one day sending them to evangelize their country. It is perhaps from this letter to Candidus that the celebrated and graceful legend originated : " *non angli, sed angeli.*"[26]

The Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain had ended in the complete destruction of Roman civilization in that part of it which had been occupied, that is to say, in the eastern half of the island, and in the disappearance of the native population. Seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had divided up among themselves the conquered country, and Christianity, which had been thoroughly driven out of that territory, maintained itself only among the Britons of the west and among the Scots of the North, who had remained independent.

If the reader will consider well the words of the letter addressed to Brunhilde and those of the letter addressed conjointly to the two kings Thierry and Theodebert, it will be evident—a fact which has not been sufficiently noted—that the first overtures in regard to a mission to the *Angli* were made to Rome *from England itself*.

"News has reached us," writes Gregory to the two kings, "that the nation of the *Angli* desires greatly to be converted to the faith, but that the bishops of the neighbourhood neglect (this pious wish) and refuse to encourage it by their preaching."[27] He writes to Brunhilde: "News has reached us that the nation of the *Angli* wishes to become Christian, but that the bishops of the neighbourhood have no pastoral solicitude for them."[28] By bishops of the neighbourhood ("*sacerdotes e vicino*" and "*sacerdotes qui in vicino sunt*") must be understood, not the bishops of the Britons or the Scots, but *the bishops of*

northern France. Gregory wishes that the pastoral solicitude of Rome should replace the latter's inertia.

Gregory, therefore, formed at Rome a company of missionaries, taken from the monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, and placed them under the leadership of the monk Augustine.

There were forty of them, who left Rome in the spring of 596 and went as far as Provence. But soon discouragement brought them to a halt. Augustine returned to Rome, where Gregory gave to him for his companions a letter which we possess.[29] He wrote:

"Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is better not to begin a good enterprise than to turn back from it, even in thought, when you have once commenced it. Therefore, dearly loved sons, it is necessary to bring to a good ending the task which with the help of God you have assumed. Do not let the difficulty of the journey, or the evil tongues of men alarm you. With all your steadfastness, with all your fervour accomplish what you have undertaken, in obedience to God's command, and know well that your labour, which is great, will be followed by an eternal reward of glory. Augustine, your superior (præpositus), whom I give you as your abbot, is returning to you. In everything obey him humbly. Know that what you shall do under his orders will be profitable in every way to your souls. May almighty God

protect you by his grace and may he grant me the joy of seeing the fruit of your labours in the eternal fatherland of the soul. If I cannot work with you, let me be with you at least in the joy of the recompense, for I wish to labour. May God keep you, my dearly loved sons, safe and sound!

"Given on the tenth of the calends of August, in the XIV year of the reign of our Lord Mauricius Tiberius, most pious Emperor, and the XIII year after the consulate of our same Lord, and of the convocation the XIV."

That is a complete picture of Gregory, with his good sense, his humility, and a touching sincerity, in which there is not evident the least ostentation. And this simple letter is the preface to a kind of epic! The Pope gave to Augustine letters which commended him to the Frank bishops who were dependants of Rome—Serenus of Marseilles, Virgilius of Arles, Desiderius of Vienne, Syagrius of Autun, to the kings Thierry and Theodebert, and to the queen Brunhilde. We know that the missionaries were cordially received by the king of Neustria, Clothaire, in Paris. The Pope had enjoined upon them to take some priests with them "*e vicino*" (which can mean only from the north of France), to serve as interpreters in England.[30] They finally approached, towards Easter 597, the kingdom of Kent, whose king, Ethelbert, had for his wife a Frank princess, Bertha, daughter of the king Charibert and niece of Brunhilde. Bertha, who was a Christian, must

have prepared the way for the Roman missionaries, and we are therefore not surprised that the king of Kent received them with honour and installed them near him at Canterbury (Durovernum). Gregory soon learned of the prodigious success of their preaching, and wrote to Eulogius, the patriarch of Alexandria, as follows: "The nation of the *Angli*, relegated to a corner of the world, had remained until recently devoted to the worship of wood and stones, when, by the aid of your prayers and the inspiration of God, I decided to send thither a monk from my monastery to preach to it. He was made a bishop, with my permission, by the bishops of Germany, and with their assistance was conducted to that nation at the limit of the world. And now there come to us letters which tell us what this monk has become and what he has done. The brilliant effect of his miracles and those of his companions is such that they seem to be renewing the virtues of the apostles in the prodigies which they multiply. On the festival of Christmas of this present convocation, we are told that more than 10,000 *Angli* were baptized by our brother the bishop."[31]

This beautiful Nativity in 597 had been preceded on June 1 by a vigil of Pentecost no less beautiful, for on that day the king Ethelbert had been baptized. The conversion of the *Angli* must have been the great consolation of Saint Gregory. On June 1, 601, he wrote to Augustine, *episcopo anglorum* (J. 1826), as follows:

"*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis!* The grain of wheat, on falling into the ground, died, in order that the Lord, whose death is our life, whose weakness is our strength, whose passion is our deliverance, for the love of whom we seek in Britain brothers whom we do not know, and through whose gift of grace we have found those whom we sought without knowing them, should not reign in heaven only. Who could describe the joy that burst forth in the hearts of all the faithful here at the news that the nation of the *Angli*, through the grace of God and by the labour of your Fraternity—the darkness of error having been dispelled—has been flooded with the light of the holy faith, and furthermore that it now tramples on the idols, to which a senseless terror so recently subjected it, and with a pure heart prostrates itself before almighty God?"

Gregory wrote also to the queen Bertha (J. 1825), and the letter was brought to her by the priest Laurentius and the monk Peter, whom Augustine had sent to Rome and who had told the Pope all that the mission owed to the queen of Kent. He says:

"We have blessed almighty God who has deigned to make the conversion of the nation of the *Angli* your reward. As formerly he kindled in the hearts of the Romans the flame of Christian faith by means of Helena of never to be forgotten memory, the mother of the most pious emperor

Constantine, so through the zeal of your Eminence he has shown his mercy in the nation of the *Angli*. In fact, for a long time your Christian prudence has inclined the mind of our glorious son, your husband, to embrace the faith which you possessed, for the salvation of his kingdom and his soul, in order that through him and by him you might gain in the joys of heaven your reward for the conversion of your entire nation. . . . Your virtues are known, not only by the Romans, who have prayed most fervently for your life, but by many others, and even at Constantinople by the most serene prince. May the angels in heaven rejoice over your saintly conduct ! "

Gregory cast the fullest light on the part taken by the queen of Kent in the conversion of the king and kingdom. Observe the care of the Pope to inform the *basileus* of Constantinople of this, as well as the bishops of Alexandria. In his opinion the conversion of the *Angli* would be as little a matter of indifference to the Republic as it would be to the universal Church, and he does not separate these two unities in his solicitude.

A little later, Gregory sent to Augustine a reïnforcement of monks for his mission. He commends them (J. 1831) to the bishops of Arles, of Vienne, of Lyons, of Chalon-sur-Saône, of Metz, of Paris, and of Rouen. " The multitude of those of the nation of the *Angli* who are converted to the grace of the Christian faith is so great, that our reverend brother whom we have in common, the

bishop Augustine, declares that his companions are not sufficient for the task." Evidently, the Pope endeavours to interest the Frank episcopate in the spiritual conquest of England. He wishes to interest in it likewise the kings Thierry, Theodebert, and Clothaire, and he writes to them, as well as to Brunhilde. He praises the latter[32] for coöperating with zeal and devotion in all that concerns the propagation of the faith (" *quidquid ad propagationem fidei pertinere cognoscitis* "). To the king Ethelbert[33] he writes :

" Glorious son, hasten to spread abroad the Christian faith among the peoples who are subject to you ; increase your righteous zeal in converting them ; hunt out the worship of idols ; overturn their temples, put in order the morals of your subjects by exhorting them, threatening them, caressing them, correcting them, and giving them a good example according to their need. . . . In this way the most pious emperor Constantine rescued the Roman Republic from the wicked worship of idols."

Then all at once, Saint Gregory was seized with the fear of having thus excited the king's zeal, and he wrote[34] to the head of the mission, Mellitus, a letter which was to overtake him *en route*. He wrote in this : " Say to Augustine that I have reflected much on the case of the *Angli* and have decided that the *temples* of the idols in this nation ought not to be destroyed, but *only the idols they contain*. Prepare some holy water, sprinkle the

temples with it and build altars and place in them holy relics, because if these temples are well-constructed, they must pass from the worship of demons to the service of God." Gregory is convinced that places of worship always remain dear to the people, and that it is necessary to instal the Christian faith in localities where the converts will love to come, because they always have come there. The *Angli* are accustomed to sacrifice oxen to the idol; well, let the *Angli* make a feast on the occasion of the dedication of a church or of the birthday of the martyrs whose relics this church shall have received. They will kill and eat their oxen to the glory of God. It is impossible to forbid everything at once to such uncultivated people.

It remained for Gregory to organize this conquest. He sent to Augustine a letter[35] by which he conferred upon him the pallium for having brought to God the new Church of England ("*nova anglorum Ecclesia*"). Then he outlined the constitution of this church, deciding that London should be its metropolis with twelve suffragan bishops. The bishop of London would be consecrated by the synod of his suffragans and would receive the pallium "from this holy and apostolic See which we serve."

Augustine was to station a bishop at York; if the city and the neighbouring places embraced the faith, then the bishop of York was to give himself twelve suffragan bishops, of whom he would be the metropolitan; he would also receive from

Rome the pallium. During his lifetime, Augustine was to have authority over York, but subsequently York and London were to be Sees of equal rank. Moreover, so long as Augustine lived, not only all the bishops whom he or the bishop of York had ordained would be subject to him, but all the other bishops of Britain as well.

It should be observed that Gregory did not allow himself to have a vicar in England, nor did he grant any prerogative to the royal authority. He wished to have the bishops grouped about two metropolitan Sees, and that each province should be governed by synods, in conformity with the holy canons. The symbolic bond of the pallium would unite them by their respective metropolitans to the apostolic See. He did not doubt that the bishops created by Augustine would be as Roman in sentiment as he and as anxious to consult Rome as he had been,[36] and equally attached to the Catholic communion, which had its guarantee in Rome. Meanwhile, Gregory drew up the plans for a " new Church " for England, which was to be built up little by little, but which he himself saw scarcely emerge from the ground. When Augustine received the pallium, he was the only bishop of this " new Church." The two Sees of London and Rochester were created by him in 604, the year of Gregory's death, but Augustine, after having established a bishop at London, thought it best to remain in Canterbury. As to the other bishops of Britain, remotely isolated in

the regions of the west and north, which had resisted the Anglo-Saxon conquest, they kept shyly apart in their solitudes and did not respond to the advances made to them by Augustine.[37] The future of England lay in Canterbury, which Gregory had made a colony of Rome.

Gibbon, usually so disdainful of Christianity and so contemptuous of Christian Rome forgets here his tenacious prejudices. "The conquest of Britain," he writes impressively, "reflects less glory on the name of Cæsar than on that of Gregory I." For this purpose Cæsar disembarked six legions on the British coast; Gregory needed only forty monks.[38]

[1] J. 1912, August 603.

[2] J. 1111, April 591.

[3] The letter of Reccared is found in Ewald-Hartmann, II, 220. Its authenticity, disputed by Gams and Mommsen, is defended by Ewald.

[4] J. 1757, August 599. The Pope said: "Antiquæ consuetudini . . . debeamus." Some have wished to see here a recall of the vicariate conferred on the bishops of Seville by the Popes Simplicius and Hormisdas. But there is not a shadow of proof of the existence of such a vicariate in the time of Saint Gregory. The ancient custom consists in giving to some bishops of the Occident the Roman pallium. In the letter of Leander, which accompanies the sending of the pallium, Gregory writes: "Ex benedictione beati Petri apostolorum principis pallium vobis transmisimus, ad sola missarum solemnia utendum. Quo transmisso, valde debui qualiter vobis esset vivendum admonere, sed locutionem supprimo, quia verba moribus anteitis" (J. 1756).

[5] Mansi, *Concilia*, IX, 992. In the profession of faith published by the Council of Toledo there is mention,

àpropos of Chalcedon, of the letter of Saint Leo to Flavian, "epistulam sancti ac beatissimi primæ sedis archiepiscopi Leonis." *Ibid.*, 982.

[6] Duchesne, 579. Cf. Schubert, 177–179.

[7] Duchesne, 528–530.

[8] See the letter of Gregory to Dynamicus *patricius Galliarum*, which begins thus (J. 1237): "Monstrat quam bene dispenset propria qui fideliter administrat aliena. . . ." Compare the letter of Asclepiodotus: "Ab excellentissimis regibus Francorum filiis nostris poposcimus ut ipsum patrimoniolum sub sua cura habere dignentur. . . ." (J. 1833).

[9] Concerning the vicariate of Arles, see my "*Siège apostolique*," 210–226, and Schubert, 44 and 159.

[10] J. 1376, August 15, 595.

[11] Compare what he writes to Virgilius of Arles (J. 1374), whose merit he declares he knows well, "sicut mihi de te et hi qui ex gallicanis partibus veniunt testantur." In this same letter Gregory calls to mind that Gaul was evangelized from Rome: "Cunctis liquet unde in Galliarum regionibus fides sancta prodierit." Compare *Dialog.* III, 17: "Et quidem post resurrectionem carnis de Lazari virtutibus tacetur."

[12] The bishop of Gap, Arigius, having made the journey to Rome, Gregory, who informs us of it, shows for the bishop real tenderness. In return, the bishop asks of Gregory for himself the privilege of using the "dalmatical vestments" (J. 1748, July 599). See J. Zettinger, "Die Berichte über Rompilger aus dem Frankenreiche bis zum Jahre 800." *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1900.

[13] (J. 1375, August 12, 595). In 567, the summons of two bishops is registered, who had been deposed by a Council. Gontran sent them to Rome to Pope John III, and they returned absolved. These two bishops were from Provence—Salonius from Embrun and Sagittarius from Gap. Their history is in Gregory of Tours (V, 20). It is the only case of appeal to the Pope which we meet with in the Merovingian epoch. Duchesne, 532; Schubert, 158.

[14] Against simony Gregory urges, among other reasons, one which well reveals his character; it is, that simony excludes the poor from holy orders. "Hinc fit ut insontes

et pauperes a sacris ordinibus prohibiti despectique resiliant" (J. 1744). Concerning the paganism still endemic in France in the seventh century, see Schubert, 165.

[15] Dudden, II, 71. G. Kurth, "La reine Brunehaut," *Revue des questions historiques*, 1891, VI, 5–79.

[16] J. 1747, July 599.

[17] J. 1743, same time.

[18] J. 1744, same time.

[19] J. 1840, June 22, 601.

[20] J. 1837, same date.

[21] J. 1871, November 602.

[22] J. 1873, same time.

[23] *Concilia ævi merovingici;* ed. Maassen (1893), 185–192. Duchesne, 539–540.

[24] Duchesne, 592–594. Dom Gougaud, *Les chrétientés celtiques* (1911), 205–211.

[25] J. 1386, September 595.

[26] Duchesne, 600. Schubert, 217.

[27] J. 1432, July 596.

[28] J. 1433, same time.

[29] J. 1434, July 23, 596.

[30] This detail is in the letter of the Pope to the kings Thierry and Theodebert (J. 1432): "Injunximus ut aliquos secum e vicino debeant presbyteros ducere. . . ." The fact is confirmed by Bede: "Acceperunt, præcipiente beato papa Gregorio, de gente Francorum interpretes." *Hist. eccl.*, I, 25.

[31] J. 1518, July 598. Gregory has Augustine ordained "by bishops of Germany." After this, it is difficult to think that he was ordained by the bishop of Arles. Schubert, 218.

[32] J. 1839, June 22, 601.

[33] J. 1827, same date.

[34] J. 1848, July 10, 601.

[35] J. 1829, June 22, 601.

[36] See Ewald-Hartmann, II, 332–342, for the questions put to Saint Gregory by Augustine and the answers of the former. Concerning their authenticity, *ibid.*, 331–332, Dudden, II, 130–131, and Grisar, 274. Among other things, the jurisdiction of Augustine is there defined.

At that date, he is still the only bishop in England, "adhuc solus tu episcopus inveniris." He has no authority over the bishops of Gaul, who are subject to the bishop of Arles. Gregory confides to Augustine the British bishops: "Britannorum omnium episcoporum tuæ curam fraternitati committimus, ut indocti doceantur, infirmi persuasione roborentur, perversi auctoritate corrigantur." We are here far removed from the doctrine which denies that the Pope had any authority over England! It is true, there is attributed to Dinoot, an abbot of Bangor, a reply to Augustine which rejects the authority "of him whom you call the Pope, who claims unlawfully to be the father of fathers," but this reply is a forgery of the sixteenth century. Gougaud, 211.

[37] Schubert, 221.

[38] E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, XLV (ed. Bury, 1901 V, 36).

CHAPTER VIII

SAINT GREGORY AND THE ORIENT

FROM a Roman point of view, the Orient consisted of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and the ecclesiastical provinces which grouped themselves around these four great metropoles. We leave Illyricum out, for it was a dependency of Rome. In taking possession of the See, the bishop of Rome addressed a "synodical epistle" to the bishop of Constantinople and the three other Oriental patriarchs, to announce to them his elevation and to establish communion with them. We have the letter in which Saint Gregory acquits himself of this duty; it was the same notice for all four, and was addressed as follows: "Gregory to John of Constantinople, to Eulogius of Alexandria, to Gregory of Antioch, to John of Jerusalem . . . " (J. 1092). Gregory did not hesitate to give the first place in the list to the bishop of Constantinople and to conform thus to the order of seats (ordo sedium) consecrated by Justinian in confirmation of the famous 28th canon of the Council of Chalcedon, so resolutely rejected by Pope Saint Leo. The letter of Gregory was sent to Constantinople in Latin. There, he

knew, it would be translated into Greek; and Gregory wrote to Aristobulus, a functionary of the Court, to recommend this translation to his care, for he desired to have it clear rather than literal (J. 1097).

The synodical letter of the Pope contains a long prelude on the episcopal office (*cura pastoralis*), replete with thoughts dear to the author no doubt, but which, in such a communication, have the appearance of a *hors d'œuvre* in a bill of fare. On reaching the last paragraph, we find the profession of faith of the new bishop, which is the obligatory theme of every synodical letter. The Pope declares that, as he receives the four Gospels, so he receives and venerates the four Councils (Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon), and likewise the Council of Constantinople of 553, which condemned the Three Chapters. All the persons whom the aforesaid Councils rejected, he rejects; and those whom those Councils venerate, he embraces; the Councils being the expression of universal consent ("*universali consensu constituta*"). Peace be to him who professes the faith of these Councils!

In return, when a new patriarch is elected in Constantinople, his synodical letter will be awaited in Rome, and until it shall have been received, Rome will have no relations with the elected patriarch. It is the same with the other Oriental patriarchs. It is sufficient that the communion be ratified between the apostolic See and the four

patriarchs, for it to be also confirmed by the whole Catholic episcopate. The apostolic See answers for the faith of the Occident, as each of the patriarchs answers for the faith of the bishops who are dependent on him.

The union of Rome and the Byzantine Orient would have been a federation, existing only on paper, if it had been really limited to this interchange of synodical letters at each enthronement of a patriarch. The *basileus* was the bond which maintained the concrete unity of these Oriental patriarchs, and to the *basileus* was accredited a representative of the bishop of Rome, the papal envoy (*apocrisiarius*). A continual contact was kept up by Rome with the Court of Constantinople and with the *basileus*, who was responsible for order and orthodoxy in the patriarchates. The Pope had to reckon with him.

As an example of this (J. 1074), Anastasius, the patriarch of Antioch, was deposed, in 570, by order of the emperor Justin II. Having retired to Constantinople, this former patriarch must have made the acquaintance of Saint Gregory there, who, as soon as he was elevated to the See of Rome, wished to ask the emperor Mauricius to permit Anastasius to come to Rome to live with him ("*mecum vivere*").

Anastasius, therefore, could not leave Constantinople to establish himself at Rome without the consent of the *basileus*. Not only that; for the Pope asked the emperor to restore to the

deposed bishop, not his See, but the episcopal dignity, or more precisely, the use of the pallium, in order that he could live at Rome, as bishop, "*in honore suo.*" So, though Anastasius is deprived of the pallium at Constantinople, the *basileus* can restore it to him, if he likes, but the Pope dares not do so, even in Rome.

The union having been once established by the synodical letter, the relations of Rome and the patriarchs (other than the one of Constantinople) are characterized by nothing but occasional or personal incidents. Saint Gregory refuses to enter into difficulties which one or the other patriarchs may experience. The abbot of the monastery of Neas informed the Pope of some quarrels which he had with Amos, his bishop of Jerusalem. "These are old quarrels," replied Gregory, "for between the father of this monastery and the bishop of Jerusalem it is customary for disputes to rise continually (*semper esse jurgia consueverunt*)." He advises the abbot to come to an agreement with the bishop. "I say that, my most dear brother, because I love you both much and I fear that your prayers may be spoiled by your dissensions" (J. 1475).[1]

If, however, Saint Gregory learns that disorders are prevalent, without any effort being made to correct them, he takes it on himself to address to the patriarch at fault a fraternal admonition which he considers it his duty and right to do. Thus the report reached Rome that, in the churches of the

Orient, no one attained to a holy order, without paying the price for it. "If you establish the fact that this is so," he writes to the newly promoted bishop of Antioch, "offer to God, as the first fruits of your episcopate, the resolution that in the churches under your jurisdiction this sin of the simoniac heresy shall be cut short" (J. 1661). The Pope had no direct relations with these churches of the patriarchate of Antioch, and, indeed, intervened only through the intermediary of the patriarch. We have also a similar warning addressed by Gregory to the bishop of Alexandria (J. 1909).

The right to appeal to Rome was one that the Orient recognized, but, as a matter of fact, although we have no evidence that appellant parties came to Rome from Alexandria and Antioch, it is certain that they did come from Constantinople. Indeed, we know of two priests condemned on a matter of faith by a regular judgement at Constantinople, whose case was taken to Rome, where it was dealt with also in due form, "*facto concilio.*" The sentence pronounced at Constantinople was here reversed and the two priests were rehabilitated.[2]

These two instances are very significant, for they are the best proof that the primacy of the apostolic See was not merely a primacy of honour, but was occasionally a primacy of judicial authority, and that the competency of the bishop of Rome was not contested by the bishop of Constantinople himself.

Of the preëminence (*principatus*) inherited from Saint Peter, Saint Gregory sacrificed nothing. He laid claim to it, however, with a manifest anxiety not to disturb any other right by this privilege. This is very perceptible in his relations with Alexandria and Antioch. It has been made by some a pretext for saying that Gregory conceived of this apostolic *principatus* as being possessed also by the Sees of Alexandria and Antioch, and that this concession served him well to make sure of the aid of those two cities in his campaign against the patriarch of Constantinople in regard to the œcumenical pretensions of that city.[3] An examination of the texts which can be cited proves, above all, the deference with which Gregory treats the Sees of Alexandria and Antioch, both of which were apostolic; but the sincere as well as wise humility of Saint Gregory does not lessen the privilege of his own See, and nowhere do we observe that he really attributes this privilege to other Sees than his own. Saint Peter had honoured (*decoravit*) the See of Alexandria, by giving to it his disciple, the evangelist Saint Mark; and he strengthened (*firmavit*) the See of Antioch by occupying that post for seven years; but he exalted (*sublimavit*) the See of Rome, which was the terminus of his career and the place of his death.[4]

It would be a great mistake to confound the preëminence which the bishop of Rome inherited from the apostle Peter and which gives to him

over the whole Church a primacy of care, responsibility, power, and divine assistance; it would, I say, be a mistake to confound this *principatus* with the strict and precise rights of a metropolitan bishop which he exercises over his own suburban bishoprics.

The *principatus* is a help which becomes operative when an appeal is made to the Pope, or when the Pope thinks that his intervention is opportune or necessary; but it has nothing in it like an organized enforced centralization.

Each of the Oriental patriarchates was self-supporting and looked after the vacancies of the different Sees, province by province. The patriarch of Constantinople, appointed by the grace of the emperor, had no need of a confirmation by the Pope in order to hold his post legitimately. The autonomy of the Byzantine episcopate under the *basileus* was almost complete and was guaranteed by him, its union with Catholicism being safe through its union with the Pope.[5]

There was only one domain in which the Orient recognized fully that it could do nothing without Rome, and that was the domain of faith. Since the time of Justinian especially, it was not even conceived at Constantinople that a controversy, like that of the Three Chapters, could be arbitrated without the assistance of the apostolic See, or that an œcumenical Council could be held without the Pope. But the pontificate of Saint Gregory saw no great controversy arise, and no assembling of

any great Council, and therefore never set in motion the authority without which (as had been established) nothing could be really settled.[6]

* * * * *

We have set Illyricum—the Balkan peninsula—apart from the rest of the Byzantine Orient. Illyricum, in fact, was not, like Thrace, dependent on Constantinople, but on Rome. Each province had its Council and its metropolitan, while the Pope had a vicar, the bishop of Thessalonica. Indeed, since Justinian and Pope Vigilius, there had been two vicars in Illyricum, the second being the bishop of Justiniana Prima (Scopia, Uskub). In 591, the See of Justiniana Prima being vacant, a bishop was elected there, and immediately the bishops of Illyricum sent a priest and a deacon to Rome to inform Saint Gregory of the fact. The letter (J. 1165) which Gregory addressed to them, in reply, makes known to us that the bishop John had been elected unanimously by the Council and with the consent of the most serene emperor. The Pope confirmed the choice of the new bishop (" *nostri assensus auctoritate firmamus* "), considered his consecration as valid, conferred upon him the pallium, and declared him vicar of the apostolic See. The bishop then wrote to the Pope and sent him presents (*xenia*).

In his reply, Gregory writes (J. 1164):

" I absolutely did not wish to accept these gifts from your Holiness, because it was shocking to me

to accept presents from brethren who have been despoiled and afflicted by our enemies.[7] But your messengers overcame my reluctance by pointing out to me that they offered these presents to someone (Saint Peter) who could not refuse the offerings of your Fraternity."

The bishop of Justiniana Prima, who began so well, found himself soon after engaged in an affair in which he was destined to see another aspect of the Pope's authority. Two deacons of the Church of Thebes, in Thessaly, who had for good reasons been deposed by their bishop Adrian, had out of revenge brought before the *basileus* accusations against the aforesaid bishop. This took place in a province near the imperial city, and they had recourse to the discretionary authority of the emperor, always disposed to receive all complaints, even if they were against a bishop. The emperor referred the matter to the bishop of Larissa, who condemned Adrian. The latter appealed to the sovereign, and this time the affair was sent by the emperor to the bishop of Justiniana Prima, who confirmed the sentence of Larissa. Then, and only then, Adrian took his case to Rome, even going thither in person, and moved the Pope by his tears. We know, thanks to Saint Gregory, all the intricacies of this imbroglio which he unravelled. Only the sentence concerns us, and this rehabilitated the bishop of Thebes, withdrew him from the jurisdiction of Larissa, and refused to recognize the judgement of Justiniana Prima. But the

justice of Gregory was intended to give a lesson to those bad judges. The bishop of Justiniana Prima had his lesson, as is shown by Gregory's letter to him: "The decisions of your sentence, having been quashed and declared null by the authority of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, we decide that you shall be deprived of the holy Communion during thirty days in order that you may by a rigorous penance and tears obtain from almighty God forgiveness for so great an abuse of power" (J. 1210).

The bishop of Larissa also was obliged to restore to Adrian his See of Thebes. Already Pope Pelagius II, for reasons unknown to us, had withdrawn from this bishop of Larissa his jurisdiction over Thebes, and Gregory now confirmed this unusual order. He says: "In accordance with what our predecessor wrote, if our colleague Adrian is ever accused concerning matters of faith, morals, or money, the case shall be brought before our envoys who are or shall be in the imperial city (Constantinople), provided the affair is of minor importance; but if it is difficult, it shall be referred to the apostolic See, so that the sentence may be pronounced by us (*nostræ audientiæ sententia*). If, at any time or on any occasion whatsoever, you shall try to escape from the arrangements thus made, know that you will be deprived of the holy Communion and that you will not recover the use of it (unless you are at the point of death), except by the consent of the Roman Pontiff. We decide

thus in conformity with the teaching of the holy Fathers, that whoever does not obey the sacred canons, is not worthy to serve at the holy altars or to receive the blessed Sacrament" (J. 1211). Saint Gregory apparently considered the vicariate of the bishop of Thessalonica as thenceforth a purely honorary dignity, and did not confide to the aforesaid vicar the duty of judging the bishop of Thebes, if there should be any occasion for it in future, but charged his envoy or *responsalis* of the apostolic See at Constantinople with that duty. This was an innovation which no doubt assured better justice and which, after all, was applied only in some exceptional situation.

Observe also that Gregory inflicts these severe penalties on the bishops of Justiniana Prima and Larissa without regard to the fact that both of them had proceeded in this affair by the emperor's order. The lesson addressed by the Pope to them, was addressed by implication also to the emperor. In this Byzantine Illyricum, which had remained subject to Rome, the Pope exercised a direct jurisdiction, which ran the risk of becoming entangled with interferences on the part of the *basileus*. Gregory was determined to defend justice, order, and the holy canons, and we have just seen the firmness which he used with those bishops who were devoid of any sense of right and were exercising a lay authority which was despotism itself. We shall see that this bishop John of Justiniana Prima, having become recon-

ciled with the Pope, will be defended by him against this despotism.

For, in fact, the emperor, under the pretext that John was now infirm, ordered that the Council should appoint a successor for him, " for fear that the city, if it had not the prestige of a bishop, would succumb to its enemies," the Avars, who were threatening it. Gregory, informed by his envoy at Constantinople of this " precept " of the emperor, replied that " the canons nowhere permit a successor to be given to a sick bishop. We cannot consent to it without sin." It is permissible only to suggest to the emperor to give to the invalid bishop a *dispensator*, who shall administer the Church in his name and shall make the defence of the city sure (" *custodia civitatis* "). The bishop could also resign, on condition that his resignation be given in writing.

He adds :

" If the bishop refuses to give it, then the very pious emperor has the power to do all that seems good to him and all that he commands to be done. Let the emperor be governed by what is known to him. But let him not mix us up with the deposition of this bishop ! We will accept what the emperor shall do, if it is canonical. If it is not canonical, we will submit to it, so far as we can do so without sin."[8]

Here in a few words we have the emperor's sovereignty defined : " *Quod piissimo imperatori placet, quidquid jubet facere, in ejus potestate est.*"

We have also the definition of the limit which the ecclesiastical law opposes to that "pleasure" of the sovereign, in itself so limitless: "*Si canonicum est, sequimur. Si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro valemus, portamus.*"

There are the holy canons to be considered, and there is conscience, which must remain inviolable.

* * * * *

The emperor Mauricius, whom certain modern historians are endeavouring to present to us as "the only *basileus* of the sixth century who seems to have had a superior mind,"[9] was judged much more severely by Saint Gregory. In a letter which he wrote, in 593, to Domitianus, bishop of Melitene, the cousin of the emperor and a refugee at the Court, we read in a postscript some rather obscure lines on Mauricius: "You say very justly of Mauricius that, in his conduct, one knows the statue by its shadow; with him, great things are to be judged by the smallest. In this affair we trust ourselves to him because oaths and hostages bind his soul to us."[10] We do not know to what circumstance these words refer. Gregory agrees with Domitianus in saying that the emperor is impenetrable: that is, "one sees of the statue only its shadow," and that it is necessary to divine the secrets of the sovereign by the most trivial indications which betray his thought.

Gregory, as we know, kept an envoy (*apocri-*

siarius) permanently at Constantinople. A continual correspondence must have gone on with this *chargé d'affaires*, for the Pope was constantly solicited to intercede there for beggars or complainers. There was no one, even to distinguished personages at Constantinople, who did not solicit Gregory to support their petitions at Court. The government also wanted the influence of the man who constituted the supreme judge of the "good pleasure" of the sovereign. Gregory observed a prudent course, fearing to be importunate, but, when it was necessary, he spoke courageously. Yet with what circumspection and caution he had to use his courage! The first letter of the Pope to the emperor is one in which Gregory asks that a law which wounds his conscience be revoked. A Saint Ambrose would have written it in the same spirit, but in a different style. He would not have shown the obsequiousness of Gregory, who calls himself the "unworthy servant of your holiness" ("*indignus pietatis vestræ famulus*"), and protests that he does not speak as a bishop, nor as an authorized servant of the Republic ("*neque ut servus jure rei publica*"), but as a simple individual ("*jure privato loquor*"). But was so much servility really required[11] by the etiquette of the Court of Constantinople?

The edict which Gregory wished to have repealed was one of those which had been so common since Justinian's day, and by which the *basileus* decreed laws about Church discipline. It prohibited the

elevation of anyone belonging to the public administrations to an ecclesiastical office. Gregory unreservedly approved this arrangement,[12] but the same law forbade those same subjects and also military men to become monks.[13] The Pope considered this latter prohibition an offence to God. He writes: "I cannot keep silent about it to my lords" (*Dominis tacere non possum*), meaning by these the emperor Mauricius and his son. At once and very simply Gregory rises to defend the principle which he feels is menaced. The sovereignty or "*potestas super omnes homines*" belongs to the emperor and is given to him by God, but to what ends? In order that the temporal kingdom may serve the heavenly kingdom ("*Ut terrestre regnum cælesti regno famuletur*").

The proof that the obsequious tone at the commencement of this letter was purely an affair of etiquette, is seen by the turn which the Pope's letter now takes. He appeals to the religion of the emperor, which he knows is profound. "Through me, who am the least of his servants," he writes, "Christ says to you: 'I have raised you from the position of a notary to be commander of the palace guard (*comes excubitorum*); from the *comes excubitorum* to be Cæsar, from Cæsar to be emperor, and still more to be the father of an emperor. I have also put my bishops into your hands, and do you now withhold your servants from my service?' What emperor before you ever published such a law as this? The end

of the world is drawing near. We have not much longer to wait for the coming of the redoubtable Judge. Do not let your tears, your prayers, your fasts, and even your immeasurable charities, create for you any illusions ! "

This letter is a very fine specimen of the energy which Saint Gregory shows in defending the monastic institution as well as the rights of the Christian conscience against the sovereign power of the emperor. It reveals likewise the submission which Gregory professes to the authority of the State, in principle. The law had been made at Constantinople without consulting the bishops, and had been sent to the Pope at Rome after its promulgation. The Pope wrote: " I indeed, obedient to the order, have caused this same law to be sent out through the various parts of the earth (*Ego quidem jussioni subjectus eandem legem per diversas terrarum partes transmitti feci*)." The order or *jussio* of the emperor admitted only of submission. Accordingly the Pope, who understood this perfectly, communicated the law immediately to the bishops of the Byzantine provinces of his patriarchate. Then, and then only, did he address himself to the emperor to obtain the revocation or amendment of the law. " I have done," he writes, " on both sides what I ought to do ; I have shown my obedience to the emperor, and in respect to the cause of God, I have not refrained from saying what I thought."

By this policy, deferential at first but firm as

well, Gregory was to obtain some concessions from the emperor Mauricius. We have a letter from Gregory to the bishops of the Byzantine provinces of Italy and Illyricum, for the purpose of communicating to them these concessions.[14] They will not be allowed to admit into the monasteries laymen who are obliged by their office to render a statement of their public accounts, before they have been discharged from their financial duties ("*a rationibus publicis absoluti*"). On those who come from the army a probation of three years will be imposed, before giving them the monastic habit. "In this way also the most serene and most Christian emperor, believe me, will be entirely placated" (*Qua de re etiam serenissimus et christianissimus imperator, credite mihi, omni modo placatur*).

By paying due regard to the imperial supreme power, Gregory obtained, not the revocation of the law, but the introduction into it of compromises, which safeguarded the interests of the tax-collectors and the army, and made sure of the sincerity of the conversions, but did not prevent anyone from eventually becoming a monk. Gregory may be blamed for not having denied to the emperor the right to legislate at all on the admission to the ranks of the clergy and into the monasteries,[15] a right which originated in the Byzantine conception of the emperor's sovereignty; but Gregory apparently did not think the making of this scandal advisable.

In regard to the policy to be followed in Italy towards the Lombards, Gregory had a very poor opinion of the uncompromising attitude of the Exarch Romanus, for we know that the Pope greatly desired that the Republic should make peace with the invader, whom it was powerless to subdue. To this end Gregory had obtained from Agilulf just proposals through the mediation of Ariulf, duke of Spoleto, who, he affirmed, was with all his heart disposed to come to the side of the Republic ("*toto corde venire ad rempublicam paratus*"). Romanus referred the matter to the emperor, who in his reply rejected brutally the Pope's advances. This time, Gregory, without showing disrespect to the imperial majesty, thought it indispensable to defend his own dignity and policy. "The piety of the sovereign," he said,[16] "in sparing me, has scarcely spared me at all. In the orders (*jussiones*) which he has addressed to me, the emperor has been polite enough to accuse me of simplicity, and I know that in Scripture simplicity is taken in a good sense, provided it is associated with prudence. But the emperor evidently does not attribute to me any prudence. and I am in his eyes only a rattle-pate ("*urbane simplicitatis vocabulo me fatuum appellat*"). That is understood, of course; and I should keep silent, glad to be despised and mocked at, if the captivity of my country ("*terræ meæ captivitas*") was not increasing from day to day. My most pious lord may think all the evil he wants to of me,

provided that, for the sake of the usefulness of the Republic and for the cause of Italy's deliverance, he will not listen to every one who comes along, but will deign to believe *facts*, rather than *words*."

That is the language of a patriotic Pope, who undertakes the defence of Italy against the *basileus*. But let us see how he defends the dignity of the priesthood. He writes: "Let not our master the emperor wax indignant too quickly against the bishops, but—in consideration of Him, whose servants they are—let him be their master without being lacking in the respect which is due to them (" *Eis ita dominetur ut etiam debitam reverentiam impendat* "). I suggest this to the emperor, not for myself, but for all the bishops. For I myself am a poor sinner; and because my sins are of daily occurrence, I bless God that I am daily punished; yes, I bless him, and I find thus a consolation even in the *jussiones* that come to me from my sovereign." He proceeds:

"First of all, the peace which I had made with the Lombards of Tuscany, without having cost the Republic anything, has been ruined. Then, the peace having been ruined, the soldiers have been withdrawn from the city of Rome, some of whom have been killed by our enemies, while the others have been placed at Narni and at Perugia. In order to protect Perugia, *Rome* has been abandoned! Then, it has been much worse for us since the arrival of Agilulf under the walls of Rome, and

I have seen with my own eyes Romans with a rope tied about their necks, like dogs, and led thus away to France to be sold.

"And because we, who were in the city, by God's protection, have escaped falling into the hands of Agilulf, men have tried to find what they could to reproach me with—for example, why there was a scarcity of grain, when it was impossible to preserve it long in Rome, as I have explained at greater length in another report. As for myself, I do not trouble myself about these reproaches, for I can say with a clear conscience that I am ready to suffer everything, provided I save my soul. But they have also laid the blame on the glorious prefect Gregory and the glorious general (*magister militum*) Castorius, which has grieved me very much, because these men had done all they could possibly do. During the entire siege they had borne the burden of the night watches (*vigiliæ*) and of the city's defence; and, as a reward for their services, they have been overwhelmed with the anger of the emperor. But I understand very well that what is reproached is not their conduct, but my person."

This page, magnificent in its bitter eloquence, is addressed by the patriotic Pope to the *basileus*, far away indeed, yet formidable. Mr. Dudden has said that, if Mauricius had been a Justinian, such a letter would have meant exile for the Pope. It must be said also that Gregory was a different personage from the Popes of the time of Justinian.

Mauricius received the letter, but made no reply.

* * * * *

Dalmatia had not been united again to the exarchate of Ravenna; like the rest of Illyricum, it depended upon Constantinople, although remaining ecclesiastically bound to Rome. The bishop of Salona, Natalis, metropolitan of Dalmatia, and rather a sorry figure, had a dispute with his archdeacon Honoratus, whom the apostolic See, during the lifetime of Pelagius II, had decided to be in the right. But Natalis would hear nothing of such a decision, and deposed his archdeacon to the rank of priest. But Saint Gregory did not intend to be duped by this stratagem and summoned the bishop to reëstablish Honoratus as archdeacon, or he would take from the bishop the pallium and, if he persisted, would deprive him of the holy Communion, and would subsequently pronounce a still graver punishment. Gregory informed Natalis of this summons on the one hand, by communicating it to the bishops of Dalmatia, and on the other by letting the prefect of Illyricum know that he would not support the bishop of Salona, "because it is especially necessary that he should feel the prosecution of canonical justice since the canonical law itself is ignored by him."[17]

Natalis submitted and restored to Honoratus his post of archdeacon, but not without writing to the Pope an unbecoming letter, to justify

himself. Gregory put all his energy into his reply. "Your Fraternity," he wrote, "has found it hard to endure that I should reproach your love of the table; I, who am higher than you, if not by my life, at least by my position (*locus*), am quite ready to accept being reproached by all and corrected by all, and I consider as my friend, only the man whose plain speaking enables me to wash away my faults, before the great Judge appears." He endeavours, however, to make Natalis understand the seriousness of the fault he has committed, since he has, in the affair of Honoratus, despised a sentence pronounced by both Pelagius II and Gregory. "If anyone of the four patriarchs had done as much, such audacity could not under any circumstances have passed without the gravest scandal."[18]

Natalis, who laughed derisively at canonical law, soon after committed the fault of deposing the bishop of Ragusa, without having arraigned him before the Council of the province. Shocked by this abuse of power, Gregory was about to intervene, when the news reached Rome that Natalis was dead. The Pope immediately instructed the rector of the Patrimony in Dalmatia, that it was necessary that the clergy and the people of Salona should proceed to an election, the result of which be transmitted to Rome, and that they were not to proceed to the ordination of the new bishop before having received the Pope's consent, as used to be the case in olden times ("*sicut priscis*

fuit temporibus")[19] The archdeacon Honoratus, who was in reality Gregory's candidate, was elected by the clergy of Salona, and his election was approved at Rome. The bishops of Dalmatia did not, however, accept Honoratus. "Be it so," wrote Gregory, "but by the authority of the blessèd Peter, prince of the apostles, we forbid you to ordain a bishop at Salona without our consent, under penalty of my annulling the ordination of the man elected and under penalty of excommunication for you."[20] In the same letter Gregory notified the aforesaid bishops that he did not wish that a certain Maximus should be elected, since the most unpleasant reports about him had reached Rome.

Gregory, otherwise so reserved, now took up this affair in a most thorough manner and at the same time engaged for his side the authority of Saint Peter. A serious conflict was imminent. In fact, the bishops of Dalmatia, in contempt of the sentence of exclusion pronounced by the Pope, elected Maximus, pretending to have received the command of the emperor to do so. Maximus was immediately ordained, and enthroned under a military guard, while priests, deacons, and clerics were maltreated in the ensuing tumult.[21] The rector of the Patrimony owed his safety only to flight. The intervention of the emperor thus checkmated the authority of the Pope, who could not submit either to the *jussio* of the sovereign, or to the accomplished facts.

Gregory wrote without delay to his envoy at Constantinople, as follows: "When I learned that Maximus had been with such boldness consecrated bishop, I despatched to him a letter forbidding him formally to celebrate the Mass, until I should have ascertained from the most serene lords what they had ordered him to do. This letter, officially published and posted up in Salona, he caused to be publicly destroyed, and his contempt for the apostolic See created great excitement. You know how I take such things. I am ready to die rather than see the Church of the blessed apostle Peter humiliated in my lifetime. You know well my character: I endure injustice for a long time, but, if I have once made up my mind to endure it no longer, I go forward joyously, in spite of all perils."[22]

The emperor Mauricius protested that he had not wittingly given the order to have Maximus consecrated bishop of Salona, and that he found it just that Gregory should command Maximus to appear at Rome to be tried there. The emperor "loved discipline, maintained order, venerated the canons and did not interfere in ecclesiastical matters." Gregory at least affirms this.[23] This was saying a good deal! At all events, the emperor required that Maximus, if he went to Rome to vindicate himself, should be received there "*cum honore*," which amounted to saying that the Pope should consider his consecration valid. Gregory wrote to the empress Constantia

concerning this condition, very difficult to accept, as follows:

"If the cases of bishops who are subject to me are to be settled, at the Court of the most pious lords, by the patrons (whom these bishops find there), what have I to do anyway in this Church of Rome, unhappy man that I am? My bishops will regard me as a nonentity, and they will seek, in opposition to my decisions, a refuge among secular judges, and this will be the punishment of my sins. Certainly, I can wait, but if Maximus delays to appear before my tribunal, I declare that I will not cease to demand that the canonical punishment shall be enforced against him."[24]

An agreement was finally made, proposed no doubt by the patrons of Maximus at Constantinople, and Gregory consented to submit the decision to Marinianus, bishop of Ravenna, and the only charges to be brought against the bishop of Salona were to be those of having celebrated the solemnities of the Mass after he had been excommunicated, and of having bought his ordination![25] The bishop of Salona therefore came to Ravenna in the course of the summer of 599. He swore on the body of Saint Apollinaris that he had not committed simony, and he was acquitted by Marinianus. The Pope contented himself with this satisfaction and wrote to the bishop of Salona that union with the apostolic See was restored to him and that he could send someone to Rome to request for him the pallium (J. 1703).

The Exarch of Ravenna, Callinicus, had in fact tactfully intervened to solicit the favour from the Pope that he should temper his severity ("*ut temperantius erga te ageremus*"). If Gregory had not done so, there would have been a schism of Dalmatia.

But we are now to see an affair of quite another dimension develop under analogous conditions, this time at Constantinople.

* * * * *

It will be remembered that Pelagius II, in 588, on receiving the reports of a synod held at Constantinople, had annulled them for the reason that the bishop of that city, John the Faster, had been alluded to in the documents as "œcumenical patriarch."[26] Pelagius II thought he discovered in this title the pretension of the bishop of the imperial city to attribute to himself an authority extending over the whole world. The Roman envoy was therefore ordered no longer to be present at the solemn Masses of the patriarch. Pelagius II soon after died, and as the emperor Mauricius insisted that peace should be established between his patriarch and the Pope, the Roman envoy reäppeared at the patriarch's Masses. But the latter was given to understand from Rome that it was taken for granted there that he had understood the Pope's wishes.[27]

Meanwhile, two priests, who had been condemned by a synod at Constantinople, appealed to

Rome. The Pope demanded the records of the proceedings (*gesta*) of the synod which had tried them. The patriarch paid no attention. Gregory then spoke more forcibly: "If," he wrote, "I see that the canons, in the name of which the apostolic See demands them, are disregarded, God will tell me what I am to do against those who despise it" (the apostolic See).[28] The patriarch then decided to send to Rome the *gesta* which Gregory had demanded. This was destined, however, to cause the outbreak of a tempest, for the title, persistently given to John the Faster in those *gesta*, was that of "œcumenical patriarch."

Gregory wrote at once to his envoy, Sabinianus.[29] He told him that the emperor Mauricius had advised him to keep the peace with the patriarch, but that the Pope saw in this act a cunning manœuvre on the patriarch's part. "He has counted on the fact that I should either defer to the advice of the sovereign, which would have been to confirm the usurpation of the title, or that I should not defer to it, which would be to irritate the sovereign. I shall go straight on and in this affair I shall fear only God." He then adds:

"When we receive no kind of protection against the swords of the Lombards, and when, for love of the Republic, we have lost our silver, our gold, our domains, and even our vestments, it is really too much ignominy, to lose *through them* (*per eos*) our faith besides! For it is nothing else than to lose our faith to tolerate this abominable title."

By the words "*per eos*" Gregory means the emperor Mauricius particularly, and we discover here once more his resentment, as a Roman and as bishop of the apostolic See, against what he feels to be Byzantine treason. The letter which he writes to the emperor[30] is more restrained and of a sincere loyalty, but is above all a severe—a too severe—charge against the patriarch, "who is troubling the whole Church." This proud title with which he adorns himself, "is an offence to the laws,[31] the Councils, and the precepts of Christ. Saint Peter, when he received the keys, saw confided to him the care and government of the entire Church,[32] but did not on that account call himself universal apostle. Nevertheless, the patriarch is trying to have himself called universal bishop!" Gregory protests that the cause which he (the Pope) is defending is the cause of the universal Church. "Suppose, indeed," he says, "that the universal bishop should become a heretic. The universal Church would fall away with him. Now we know a number of bishops of Constantinople who have fallen into error, such as Macedonius and Nestorius. Let us reject, therefore, this blasphemous title, which seizes for one only the dignity of all, when that one is mad enough to arrogate it to himself."[33]

We cannot enter further into the details of this affair which moved Saint Gregory so deeply, and cannot linger over the letters which he wrote concerning it to the empress Constantina and John the

Faster himself. The Pope demanded that, at Constantinople, the pretension which this provocative title implies should be renounced, and, if satisfaction were not given him, he knows what he will have to do.

The letter to John the Faster, which we have just mentioned, was written at the beginning of January 595, and the patriarch died on the second of the following September, without any indication that he had submitted. The choice of his successor, Cyriacus, was the choice of the emperor Mauricius, who had personally written to Rome to ask that he be peacefully accepted. He also caused a letter to be written to Saint Gregory by a bishop in whom he knew that the Pope had implicit confidence, Anastasius of Antioch, the same who translated into Greek the *Regula pastoralis*. The letter of Anastasius was full of affection and was also a brotherly admonition. Anastasius asked Gregory to bear in mind his own character, the tenderness of which all manifestly admired, and not to give any opportunity to the evil spirit, which asks for nothing but a chance to ruin souls.

With his usual vivacity, Gregory replies that he has always had a bad character (" *ego quidem me semper malis moribus fuisse recolo* "); that Anastasius says gracious things, but that he is like the bee—that he wishes to win him over by the sweetness of his honey, in order then to pierce him (Gregory) with his sharp sting. " You tell me," he writes, " that we ought not to give

occasion for any scandal; and the emperor also has written that to me several times. The desire is to make Gregory listen to reason, but Gregory does not lend himself easily to that sort of thing. You have not the right to say that this quarrel is of no importance. If we take it indifferently, we corrupt the faith of the universal Church."[34]

And what he says to Anastasius, he says to the emperor.[35] "You maintain that the title of œcumenical patriarch is also unimportant, '*appellatio frivoli nominis.*' I am not afraid to say that whoever assumes the title of universal bishop, or who wishes it to be given him, is a forerunner of the Antichrist."[36]

He requested his friend Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, no longer to give this title to the bishop of Constantinople, as that would be a proof that the title really belonged to the titular description he had received, and also would indicate that at Alexandria it gave no offence. Eulogius, who was on too cordial relations with Saint Gregory to refuse him this favour, thought he understood from Gregory's letter that he himself meant to reserve the title for his own use, and accordingly in writing to him, he qualified Gregory as *papa universalis*.

Gregory informed him of his mistake, as follows:

"Your Holiness has been good enough to tell us that you will no more give to certain persons, when you write to them, proud titles which only vanity has put into circulation; and, speaking of

me, you say : ' It shall be as you have commanded.' Do not speak to me of a command, I beg of you ; for I know who I am and who you are. You are to me, by your See, one of the brothers ; by your holiness, one of the fathers. I have not commanded anything ; I wanted only to indicate what appeared to me useful. . . . I said that you ought not to give that title either to me or to anyone else, and yet in the address of your letter to me, you insert that proud title and you call me *papa universalis !* I beg your sweet Holiness not to do that again. . . . I do not wish for an honour that would be conferred upon me at the expense of the honour of my brothers. My honour is that of the universal Church. It is also the solid authority of my brothers. I am honoured, when the honour due to my episcopal brethren is refused to none of them. If your Holiness treats me as *papa universalis*, you disqualify your own rank as bishop, by supposing that I am universal. God forbid ! Far from us be all words which puff up pride and wound brotherly love ! "[37]

Gregory also does not wish that the bishop of Constantinople should call himself universal bishop. There is no universal bishop. These declarations of Saint Gregory do not detract, however, from the authority over the *universal Church, which he claims for the apostolic See,* or from the subjection which he intends to impose on the bishop of Constantinople in respect to the apostolic See.[38] The humility which Gregory

professes, ought not to lead us into error concerning the dignity which he knows very well belongs to the See which he occupies.

Nevertheless, no concession was made at Constantinople even on the title "œcumenical" itself, and Gregory was destined to die without obtaining anything in this respect, nor was he to execute one of the menaces which he had announced.[39] It is not forbidden to the historian to think that in this affair, as in that of Salona, Gregory was a little hasty and a little violent.

* * * * *

The reign of Mauricius ended tragically. He was deposed by a military pronunciamento and the crown was given to the seditious general Phocas (602–610), a brutal and incapable soldier, who was to be one of the most contemptible emperors of Byzantium. Italy, which did not forgive Mauricius for having left it without assistance, welcomed the new régime, as if it had not begun in rioting and bloodshed. But, after all, under Mauricius, all his male children, Theodosius already crowned, Tiberius, Peter, Paul, and Justinian—the little princes in whose education Gregory had formerly interested himself—had been massacred!

The Pope did not hasten to salute the new emperor, but let perhaps six months pass after the inauguration of Phocas, before writing to him.[40] The letter which he then addressed to him, doubt-

less after the official reception at Rome of the portraits of the emperor and empress (April 25, 603), expresses above all these wishes: "May the universal Republic remain in tranquillity during your most happy era!" (*Quiescat felicissimis temporibus vestris universa republica*).[41] It wishes also a restoration of individual liberty, and recalls a maxim, dear to Gregory, to the effect that between barbarian kings (*reges gentium*) and the emperors of the Republic, there is this difference, that the former command slaves, while the emperors command free citizens. Historians like Gregorovius affect to veil their faces before this letter. But would they really have desired the Pope to treat the new emperor officially as a ruffian?

The Pope sent another letter to Phocas, to accredit the envoy which Rome despatched to Constantinople, the deacon Bonifacius.[42] He wrote: "Your Serene Highness has not found on your arrival any Roman deacon in the imperial palace, which is something contrary to the old custom. The reason is that the ministers of our Church, in such overwhelming and distressing times as these, had all excused themselves from that duty, and it was impossible to force any of them to go and dwell in the imperial city at the palace. Since the advent of Phocas, however, those who recently feared most to live at the Court, now ardently desire to do so. May the sovereign take pity on Italy, which for thirty-five

years has been given over to the Lombards! We have confidence that God will not leave unfinished the consolation which your reign inaugurates!"

With this letter to Phocas there is also one to the empress Leontia.[43] Gregory pays her fine compliments, and asks of God that she may be another Pulcheria, whom the Council of Chalcedon called a new Helena. May God give to the imperial couple a long life for the consolation of their subjects! Compliments and good wishes usually precede a request. Accordingly he adds:

"I ought to have recommended to you the Church of Saint Peter, which until now has contended with great trials ("*qua nunc usque gravibus insidiis laboravit*"). But I know the characteristics of your piety. The more you fear God, the more you will love him to whom it was said 'Thou art Peter.' . . . May the Apostle be the guardian of your empire!"

The letters of Saint Gregory certainly express too much confidence in the new reign and in the character of the new emperor. As we have seen in his letters to Brunhilde, the Pope was in the habit of speaking to reigning sovereigns with a deference, which seems to show that he considered in them only the authority with which God had invested them. Rome augured well of the reign of Phocas, and a column was soon to be erected to him in the forum, which is still standing and attests the popularity of this evil prince. It should be said also that Mauricius had drawn upon him-

self a flood of universal dissatisfaction.[44] We need not be surprised, therefore, that Gregory himself had more cause than anyone to be among the discontented ones ; for he, who had felt so keenly the betrayal of Italy by the blind and impotent policy of Mauricius, must have thought that the apostolic See also had been betrayed for the benefit of intriguers, like the patrons of the " œcumenical " patriarch. " The Church of Saint Peter has hitherto suffered great trials," he wrote to the empress Leontia, and the letter which presents the credentials of the envoy Bonifacius suggests that between Gregory and Mauricius there had been a tension which was almost a rupture. At Rome, therefore, the new reign produced the impression of a deliverance.

This probably explains the fact that Gregory greeted the advent of Phocas with so much confidence, and that he had for the tragic ending of the reign of Mauricius so few regrets. For, at least so far as we know, Gregory expressed not one word of pity for Mauricius and his family, and this silence pains us more than the excessive compliments addressed to Phocas.[45]

[1] Concerning the relations of Gregory with the Holy Places of Jerusalem, see Vincent and Abel, *Jerusalem*, II (1926), 922. Gregory contributed to build a house for strangers (*Xenodochium*) at Jerusalem (J. 1893).

[2] J. 1394 and 1446.

[3] Dudden, II, 227.

[4] J. 1483, July 597. Important letter to Eulogius,

bishop of Alexandria, personally greatly attached to Gregory.

[5] Even in these limits it is difficult to understand that Gregory took no interest in the Christian community in the kingdom of the Persians. It had at first been dependdent on Antioch, but it was now completely isolated. The emperor Mauricius hoped for a moment that the king Chosroes would become a Christian, and Domitianus, bishop of Melitene, was sent to convert him. Gregory was informed by Domitianus himself of the failure of this attempt, and we learn in a letter of Gregory to Domitianus (J. 1268, August 593) the regret which this caused the Pope. There is no trace of any other connection of Gregory with this magnificent settlement of Christianity.

[6] We point out the reply addressed by Gregory to a consultation of the bishops of Iberia (Georgia) on the point of knowing whether they ought to baptize the Nestorians who come back to the Catholic Church, or to be content with their profession of faith. It is very remarkable that these bishops of the Caucasus brought to Rome their case of conscience. J. 1844, June 22, 601.

[7] The Avars.

[8] J. 1819, February 601.

[9] Maspero, 254-256. A severer judgement in Dudden, II, 253.

[10] J. 1268, August 593.

[11] J. 1266, August 593.

[12] This arrangement was not new. It was consecrated in 404 in two decrees of Pope Innocent I (J. 286 and 314). It went back, on the other side, to Constantine (*Cod. theodos.*, XVI, 2, 3).

[13] Gregory explains these two arrangements in a letter to the emperor's physician, Theodore : " Forte multi milites convertebantur et exercitus decrescebat." On the other hand, the prohibition which aimed at functionaries had for its aim to insure the return of what they should be found to owe the State, " *intentio servandarum rerum* " (J. 1267, August 593).

[14] J. 1497, November 597.

[15] Grisar, 165, reproaches Baronius, Thomassin and Bianchi for having supposed that Gregory, in the plenitude

of his power, had from the first hour declared the law null and void. Gregory did nothing of the kind. But it remains true that he did not contest Mauricius' right to legislate on a matter of ecclesiastical discipline. Grisar, 185, has an instructive page about the sovereignty recognized by the Church as residing in the emperor, as such, and about the title *rector Ecclesiæ* which was given him.

[16] J. 1359, June 595.
[17] J. 1173, 1174, 1176, March 592.
[18] J. 1204, August 592.
[19] J. 1226, March 593.
[20] J. 1287, November 593.
[21] J. 1292, April 594.
[22] J. 1322, September-October 594.
[23] J. 1405, January 596.
[24] J. 1352, June 1, 595.
[25] J. 1704, July 599.
[26] The title of "œcumenical patriarch" is a title which, in the Byzantine titulary office, dates, we believe, from the schism of Acacius (484–519); at that epoch it expressed the primacy of the patriarch of Constantinople, equivalent to *Reichspatriarch*, and expressed also his independence of Rome. See G. Krüger, art. "Johannes IV, Jejunator," 504 of the Realencyclopädie of Hauck, and H. Gelzer, "Der Streit über den Titel des ökumenischen Patriarchen," *Jahrbücher für prot. Theologie*, 1887, 568. The schism being ended, the title survived, robbed of its anti-Roman signification, but retaining its meaning of effective primacy over the Oriental Byzantine episcopate. Taking this title literally, and conceiving the œcumenical patriarch as the universal bishop, it can be said that there is a misunderstanding, for οἰκουμένη does not mean the universe, but the empire. However, doubtless neither Pelagius nor Gregory were mistaken on the secret thoughts of the patriarchate, which meant to exploit the uncertainty of the term.
[27] J. 1357, June 1, 595.
[28] J. 1270, August 593.
[29] J. 1358, June 1, 595.
[30] J. 1360, June 595.

[31] Gregory did not know that the title of œcumenical was given to the bishops of Constantinople in several constitutions of Justinian. It is true, it is not found in the acts of the Council of Constantinople, in 553.

[32] This text is important as a claim to the primacy of the See of Rome. Gregory appeals to John xxi, 17 (*Petre, amas me? Pasce oves meas*); to Luke, xxii, 31 (Confirma fratres tuos); and to Matthew xvi, 18 (Tu es Petrus). He infers from these words of the Saviour: "Cunctis Evangelium scientibus liquet quod voce dominica sancto et omnium apostolorum Petro principi apostolo totius Ecclesiæ cura commissa est. . . . Ecce claves regni cælestis accepit, potestas ei ligandi ac solvendi tribuitur, cura ei totius Ecclesiæ et principatus committitur."

[33] The letter to the empress Constantina takes up this argument again. Gregory reproaches the patriarch with wishing "despectis omnibus . . . solus appellari episcopus." He represents to the princess that the emperor, her father, had sought for "sancti Petri apostoli gratiam," and that she ought not to suffer the honour due to Saint Peter to be diminished (J. 1352).

[34] J. 1470, June 597.

[35] J. 1476, same time.

[36] We have here a famous declaration which the enemies of the Council of the Vatican will take objection to. "The Papal system," writes Döllinger, "was rejected with horror by the best and greatest of the Popes, when it began to manifest itself, even though it then consisted only in honorary titles." *La Papauté*, ed. fr. (1904), 18. It is certain that Saint Gregory repudiated the term *episcopus universalis* and similarly that of *papa universalis*, which did not mean anything else. But Döllinger forgets that Saint Gregory believed that he had inherited from the apostle Peter the care of all the churches and an authority capable of rendering that care effective. See on this article Grisar, 83–85.

[37] J. 1518, July 598. John the Deacon (II, 1) saw a protest against the pride of the patriarch of Constantinople in the title of *Servus servorum Dei* which Gregory liked to use. In reality, Gregory adopted this title before

he became Pope, in 587, in regard to the donation which he made to his monastery. Saint Augustine called himself "episcopus servus Christi servorumque Christi," and Saint Cæsarius of Arles called himself "episcopus minimus omnium servorum Dei famulus." Laurentius of Canterbury and his colleagues, writing to the Scottish bishops, described themselves as "servi servorum Dei." See H. Delehaye, "Servus servorum Dei" in *Strena Buliciana*, 377–378.

[38] And this in Constantinople is conceded to him. "De Constantinopolitana Ecclesia quod dicunt, quis eam dubitet sedi apostolicæ esse subjectam? Quod et piissimus domnus imperator et frater noster ejusdem civitatis episcopus adsidue profitentur" (J. 1550). In 607, Pope Bonifacius III, second successor of Gregory, was to obtain from Phocas permission that the apostolic See should be declared "*caput omnium Ecclesiarum.*" *Liber. pontif.*, I, 316.

[39] They continued to give to the patriarch the title of œcumenical; as, for example, in 612, 618, and 629 in the new constitutions of Heraclius. Zachariae, *Jus græco-latinum*, III, 33, 38, 40, 44. The custom was perpetuated in the protocols of the Councils. Gelzer, 570–571.

[40] Phocas had been crowned at Constantinople on the previous November 23. On April 25, the portrait of Phocas and Leontia was received in Rome, "et acclamatum est eis in Lateranis in basilica Julii ab omni clero et senatu: 'Exaudi Christe, Phocæ Augusto et Leontiæ Augustæ vita.'" See the fragment of the chronicle "De Phoca coronato," P.L., LXXVII, 1349.

[41] J. 1899, April–May 603.

[42] J. 1906, July 603.

[43] J. 1907, same time.

[44] I would like to be able to quote entirely the beautiful and confiding letter of Gregory to the empress Constantina, in which he begs her to bring before the emperor Mauricius, when she can, the complaints which come from Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily against the exactions of the Byzantine tax-collectors. In Corsica, the property-holders are emigrating to the Lombards, because they cannot meet these taxes, and are obliged to sell their sons

into slavery in order to pay what the treasury demands. What Gregory relates of Sardinia is still more exorbitant. J. 1351. On the other hand, the author of the life of John the Faster describes Mauricius as a " very just and gentle " prince and a " martyr." *Rev. Bibl.*, 1925, 576, *ibid.*, the epitaph of the sister of Mauricius, a refugee in Jerusalem.

[45] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, II (1868), 133–135, is more severe.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST YEARS OF SAINT GREGORY

THE first measures taken by the emperor Phocas must have gratified the patriotism of Saint Gregory. The Exarch Callinicus who, in the spring of 601, had provoked the rupture of the peace obtained with such difficulty from the Lombards, was recalled; for, the war having been resumed, the Exarch had experienced one defeat after another. Agilulf, however, although decidedly the stronger of the combatants, came to no decisive conclusion. Callinicus was replaced by Smaragdus, who had once already been Exarch and who now succeeded in obtaining a truce of thirty days. This was not much, but Gregory considered it a success. In September 603, however, it was prolonged for eighteen months, and would end on April 1, 605 (J. 1901). Since, however, Gregory died in 604, he was still to see in his last days the continuation of the peace which he had never ceased to wish for and by his personal efforts to prepare. He was able to write to the queen Theodelinda and through her to express to the king Agilulf his thanksgiving for this conclusion of

peace. Moreover, he counted on the queen to influence Agilulf favourably, as he knew well she had always done ("*sicut consuevisti*"), to transform into a durable peace what was still only a provisional one. In 602, Theodelinda had given birth to a son, Adalwald, and the king had consented to have him baptized into the Catholic Church on the Easter festival of 603. This was a great consolation to Gregory and a new guarantee for the success of his policy of peace. He therefore expressed his great joy to Theodelinda and sent to Adalwald a crucifix containing a particle of the Saviour's Cross, together with a "portion of the Holy Gospel" in a Persian box. To the little prince's sister, whom he called "his daughter," the Pope sent also three rings—two ornamented with sapphires, the third with an onyx, and he wrote: "We beseech almighty God to keep you in the way of His commandments and to make our very excellent son Adalwald grow in His love, so that this child, who is already great among men, may be one day also glorious by his actions in the sight of our God."[1]

The bishop of Alexandria, Eulogius, observing faithfully a gracious annual custom, sent to Gregory, as a gift, a "*benedictio*" from Saint Mark, as they say in Alexandria; but this time no letter accompanied the sending. Accordingly, the Pope wrote him that he had been much saddened by this, and added: "Some time ago, a letter from Bonifacius, the keeper of the archives

(*chartularius*) who is my envoy in the imperial city, greatly disturbed me by the information that your beloved Holiness had lost your eyesight. This caused me profound sorrow. Later, I received, thank God, a letter from your Beatitude, by which I learned that you had recovered from that affliction. This, of course, greatly comforted me, and my heart had then as much joy as it had previously known bitter sorrow. To this joy of knowing that you were in good health was added that of learning from your own words that the enemies of the Church in your midst are diminishing and that the flock of the Lord is increasing. Each day, under the plough of your eloquence, the heavenly seed is growing and the granaries of heaven are being filled. We rejoice to see accomplished in you what is written in Prov. xiv, 4: 'Where there is much corn, there is manifest the strength of the oxen.' The more of God's fugitive slaves you bring back to his service, the more reward you shall obtain. I ask you to pray much for me, for I am a sinner."

Gregory is happy to learn that the preaching of the patriarch of Alexandria is also bringing back to the Church numbers of the heretical Monophysites. Elsewhere he had written to Isakios, bishop of Jerusalem, how much he had to congratulate himself for the fact that, thanks to the emperor (Mauricius), the heretics were keeping quiet. "Although their hearts are boiling with the madness of their perverted minds, under the reign

of an orthodox emperor, they do not dare to say what they think."[2] But Gregory certainly cherished an illusion about the return to the Church, and even about the silence, of the refractory Oriental opponents of the Council of Chalcedon : in spite of his having lived in Constantinople, he did not yet clearly understand the irreparable breach in the unity of the Church which these visionaries had made, and he counted far too much on the imperial power to bring them back to it.

If Gregory could have been affected by any homage paid to him, no tribute would have touched him so deeply as that of the Irish Saint Columbanus, who, established in his monastery of Luxeuil in Gaul, wrote to him, in the year 600, to ask of him, as so many did, some answers (*Responsa*) to his questions.[3] Columbanus had longed to be able to go as far as Rome to talk with Gregory personally, but he was kept a prisoner in Gaul by his infirmities and by the care of his fellow-exiles (*comperegrini*), the Irish of his monastery. He wrote : " It is impossible for me to go to you, to draw from that living source, that spiritual current and that flood of heavenly wisdom, which overflows and leaps forth from you to the life eternal."[4] Of Rome itself he wished to see only Gregory (" *te, non Romam, desiderans* "), and he asked pardon for this from the ashes of the holy martyrs. He had read the *Pastoral* of Gregory, and he asks the Pope to send him what he has written on Ezekiel.

He wishes also that Gregory would write on the Song of Solomon, and on Zacharias, which is so obscure, "in order that from these writings the blindness of the Occident may render thanks to you. Peace be to thee and thine! It is superfluous, I think, to commend to you those of my monks, whom the Saviour, in whose name they live and labour, begs you to receive."

It is in this style, unpolished but overflowing with admiration and deference, that Columbanus addresses him who is "seated in the chair of Peter, the apostle of the keys" (*clavicularius*).

The reader will recall the contention which Gregory once had with the bishop of Salona. Now their reconciliation was complete and the faults were forgotten. The Pope writes to him:

"Our common son, the priest Veteranus, on coming to Rome, found me so weak from my gouty pains, that I was wholly unable to reply to the letters of your Fraternity personally. I am afflicted and troubled to hear that the Slavs threaten you so terribly: afflicted by what I suffer with you, and troubled because access to Italy is already open to them by way of Istria. What shall I say of Julianus, the '*Scribo?*' Everywhere I see that our sins cause us to be troubled by the barbarians without and by our functionaries within. But do not be too sad, for those who are to live after us will see still more calamitous times, so that, in comparison with their trials, they will think that we have known happy

days."[5] The widespread desolation of the country does not, however, overmaster Gregory's courage. He wishes the bishop of Salona to continue to defend the poor and the oppressed. It is not Gregory who will ever repeat the words of the pagan emperor (*Ceterum nil expedit!*)

How faithful Saint Gregory was to his friends is seen in the following letter to Saint Leander, bishop of Seville. The latter had written him a letter, full of affection, which Gregory read in the presence of some good and wise men, who were profoundly moved by it. "They, however, do not," he says, "know you, as I do, of whom I cannot think without veneration; but they divine your heart by the humility of your language." He continues: "I am not to-day, dear friend, the man you formerly knew. In externals, I recognize that I have made progress, but internally what a fall! I tremble lest I be one of those, of whom it is written: '*When they were lifted up, thou hast cast them down*' (Ps. lxxii, 18). . . . In imitation of Christ, I had wished to be despised by and abhorrent to the people. . . . The exalted position which has been given me overwhelms me with its weight, and its innumerable cares distract me, and when my soul wishes to commune alone with God, they assail me and stab me, as with swords. There is no more repose for my heart! . . . The refuge of religious contemplation can no longer, or very rarely, sustain me. . . . What more can I say? My soul, sinking under its own burden, is covered

with a bloody sweat. . . . Ah! in the name of almighty God, hold out to me the hand of prayer, to me, who have fallen into these raging waves. . . . "[6]

In reality, however, the soul of Saint Gregory had not changed. He regretted the loss of his monastery and the contemplative life, as much then as he did on the first day of his pontificate. He adds: "Your Holiness suffers from the gout. Alas! the gout never leaves me and it crushes me. We will console ourselves by thinking of the faults we have committed. Sufferings are gifts of God to one who accepts them in expiation for his faults of the flesh." Touching language of one saint to another!

Marinianus, the bishop of Ravenna, was, as we know, an old member of the monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*. Gregory had caused him to be elected at Ravenna, in order to have at that See a bishop on whom he could rely. More than once, it is true, he had scolded him severely, but this he thought was treating him like a son. And now the news arrived that Marinianus was very ill; the Pope was deeply affected.[7] He wrote: "Someone from Ravenna has come, who has caused me great sorrow by telling me that your Fraternity has been ill and vomited blood. In my uneasiness, I have consulted doctors here, who pass for clever men, and I send to your Holiness the opinion of each and the prescriptions of all.

"They all prescribe rest and silence, but I doubt very much whether your Fraternity can have any in your church. It seems to me, therefore, when you shall have put your church in order, and designated those who will be able in your absence to celebrate the solemnities of the Mass, and those who can look after the episcopal palace, and exercise hospitality and watch over the monastery, that then your Fraternity should come hither before summer, so that I especially, so far as I shall be able to do so, may care for you and assure your rest, for the doctors say that the summer is very dangerous for your malady. . . . I also am very weak . . . and I see that I, too, am near death. If God wishes to call me before he summons you, I would like to end my life in your arms. . . .

"Moreover—and this is not an exhortation or an advice, but a command—do not be so unwise as to fast, for the doctors declare that fasting is the worst thing possible for a patient in your condition. I allow you to fast only five times a year, if a great solemnity requires it. Abstain also from night vigils; direct someone else to say the prayers which are recited at Ravenna over the paschal candle, and to preach the sermons on the Gospel, which accompany the solemnity of Easter. Let your dear heart do violence to its sense of duty and impose upon yourself the least possible amount of work. And this I say, in order that, in case you feel better and defer your visit to me,

you still may know what you have to do in obedience to my command."

A beautiful letter, intimate and tender, in which is also found that care for order in all details, which was so marked a characteristic of Gregory.

We see that, in spite of everything, Gregory retained his taste for study and his devotion to meditation. He had made for himself a friend of the general (*magister militum*) Maurentius, who was now in Sicily. He praises him for avoiding frivolous social gatherings ("*humana conventicula*"), and asks of him if he had anyone with whom to practise reading the Holy Scripture ("*in lectionis sacræ collegio*"). Maurentius replied that he had no one, whereupon the good Pope wrote to him: "Dear Sinner, although I am much occupied, if you will come to the abode of the blessed apostle Peter, you will be able to have me for a fellow-student[8] of the sacred writings" ("*in sacro eloquio collegam*").

As may well be supposed, his old friend Rusticiana was not forgotten. The following is the last letter that Gregory wrote to her, in February 603 (J. 1891):

Gregory to Rusticiana *patricia*:

"Every time that anyone comes to us from the imperial city (Constantinople), we never fail to inquire after your health; but, for my sins, I always hear news that I regret to learn, for they

tell me that, however weak and emaciated you may be, your sufferings from the gout only increase. I pray the omnipotent Lord that all that you suffer in your body may turn to the salvation of your soul, and that these temporal calamities may prepare for you eternal rest; and that, in compensation for these pains, the end of which you will see, joys shall be given you that will have no end. As for myself, I live on, groaning and overwhelmed by so many tasks that I regret having reached the age at which I live. In fact, all my consolation is my expectation of death. Hence I beg of you to pray for me—you owe me that much certainly—and obtain from God that I may be soon delivered from this prison of the flesh, in order to escape from the agonies which for a long time now have tortured me. . . . I ask you to salute for me my very dear son *domnus* Strategius. . . . What can I say about your return to Rome? You know how much I desire it; but when I consider your interests and obligations, I despair of ever seeing you again. I implore the Creator of the Universe, wherever you are and wherever you shall be, to protect you, by extending his hand over you, and to defend you from all evils."

From Constantinople, therefore, to Seville, and from Alexandria to Canterbury, the universal Church is ever present thus to the thought of Gregory. Although his health is so severely tried, he continually dictates replies to letters, gives

orders, and wishes—whatever he does wish—with the same decision and the same attention to minute details. To the very end, the letters of the record prove this fully. One of his last acts was to send to the poor bishop of Chiusi a winter cloak.[9]

* * * * *

Death could not have taken by surprise a man who had served to it such a long apprenticeship. Before becoming Pope and throughout the whole period of his pontificate, Gregory had experienced crises of gout and gastritis, which sometimes lasted for months and would have annihilated a less energetic man. He, who formerly had been corpulent, was now emaciated to the last degree, and he tells us he was as "desiccated as a dead man in his grave" (J. 1816).

In 599, he wrote to the patrician Venantius in Sicily (J. 1759): "I have nothing to tell you of myself except that, for my sins, in eleven months' time I have only very rarely been able to leave my bed. I am overwhelmed by so much suffering from my gout and by all my troubles, that life is for me now a torment. Every day, fainting from pain, I sigh for death, as for a remedy."

In 600, we read in a letter of his to Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria (J. 1783):

"It is now two years that I have been kept motionless in bed, tormented by such severe gouty pains, that it is scarcely possible for me to

rise for even three hours, on feast days, to celebrate the solemnities of the Mass."

In December 603, he wrote to the queen Theodelinda: "Your messengers found me ill when they arrived, and at their departure left me almost *in extremis*. If, with God's help, I recover, I will reply promptly to all your requests" (J. 1925). He was not, however, to write another letter to the queen, as he died on the twelfth of the following March (604).

We would like much to have an account of Gregory's death. In his *Dialogues* there are such beautiful deaths related by him, that one would like to imagine him dying, for example, like Saint Benedict, who predicted the day of his death, and who, on that day, worn out by fever, had himself carried into the oratory of the monastery, received there the viaticum of the Lord's body and blood, and wished to die, standing and in prayer, in the arms of his monks who supported him (*Dialogues*, II, 37).

Or, one might imagine Gregory dying as his sister Tarsilla had died, to whom her great-grandfather, the Pope Felix III, had appeared in a dream, to announce to her her approaching death, saying: "Come, I welcome you into this abode of light!" She had been attacked by fever and had reached her last day. While her death-bed was surrounded by numerous persons who had come to console her family, she suddenly raised her eyes towards heaven, and saw the Saviour

coming to her ; then, in a clear voice she exclaimed to those who were gathered about her : " Withdraw, withdraw, Jesus is coming ! " (IV, 17).

No eye-witness of the death of Saint Gregory has, however, written its recital.

In this connection, we recall the fact that, in the Roman Council of July 595, Gregory issued the following decree :

" Since, all unworthy though we are, the faithful venerate us out of respect for the blessed apostle Peter, it is proper that our human weakness should be always recognized and that the burden of veneration which the people would like to lavish upon us be declined. The great love of the faithful for the rectors of this See has given rise to the undeserved custom, on the occasion of sacerdotal funerals, of covering the bodies of the deceased with dalmaticas (tunics), which subsequently the people tear into pieces and divide among themselves like relics of the saints ; and, as in the use of many garments (*velamina*), which have touched the holy bodies of the apostles and martyrs, so from the bodies of us sinners something is asked that can be cherished thereafter with great respect. By the present decree, however, we forbid the veiling with any linen the bier (*feretrum*) which shall bear the body of the Pontiff to its place of burial.[10] Moreover, I charge the priests and deacons of this See with the execution of this decree, and if any one of them should fail to observe it, let him be anathema." It is said

that all who heard this, replied: "Let him be anathema!"

On the very day of his death, March 12, 604, Saint Gregory's body was borne from the episcopal residence (*episcopium*) of the Lateran to the basilica of Saint Peter,[11] where it was buried in the portico, at the left, beside the entrance to the consistory (*secretarium*). There he was to repose in the company of the two greatest Popes who had preceded him, Saint Leo and Saint Gelasius, until he was transferred, two centuries later, by Gregory IV into the interior of the basilica. His first tomb, of which some marble fragments still remain,[12] was decorated with a metrical epitaph, the text of which we possess. In this the poet wished to express himself in a noble style, and, though he lacked the art to do so, he noted with justice in his verses some prominent traits of the dead Pope's life, especially his charities, his writings, and the conversion of England. In the last two lines, which were intended to be classical, one sentiment at least is magnificent and will endure:

> "Hisque *Dei Consul*, factus laetare triumphis
> Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes"

Rome, which had no more consuls, found one again in Saint Gregory, and saluted in his tomb "*the Consul of God.*"

Mommsen (who was born insolent) has written that Saint Gregory, in spite of his surname "the

Great," was in reality "*ein recht kleiner grosser Mann.*"[13] But since the stature of a man is of little importance, history may be allowed to judge the character and actions of a Pope like Saint Gregory by other standards.

A patrician by birth and education, and invested for a time with the highest magistracy of Rome, Gregory learned in his family the profession of landlord, and in his public career acquired what von Schubert calls "the technique of the old Roman functionaries." At a time when venality and despotism were the plague of the Byzantine administration, he continued to uphold the noblest Roman tradition by his integrity, his respect for law, and by his care for the dignity and rights of free men, such as, by definition at least, the subjects of the Republic and of the emperor of the Romans still were. He carried also into the government of the apostolic See that spirit of disinterestedness, that fidelity to established laws and to the "sacred canons," that consideration for the rights of others, that intolerance of disorder, insubordination and injustice, and that scrupulous punctuality, which are all characteristics of a responsible magistrate, who knows that he has accounts to render and acts to justify . . . at the tribunal of God.

But noble birth does not constitute everything; far from it. Gregory knew this, and wrote: "Nobility of race is wont to produce in some individuals ignobility of mind" ("*Nonnullis solet*

nobilitas generis parere ignobilitatem mentis" (*Dialog.*, II, 23). But Gregory belonged to a family which, if it did not go back to the Anicii—even to the Christian Anicii—had been for at least three generations devoted to the service of the Roman Church, to which it had given a Pope. It was an aristocratic family, penetrated by the purest Christian spirit.

If Gregory was not the first patrician Pope, he was the first Pope who had been a monk. He still lived in the century which had seen the Benedictine community of Monte Cassino take refuge, in Rome, in the shadow of the Lateran. Gregory has written too devoutly concerning Saint Benedict, not to have been indebted to him for much, especially for his love of humility, of which Saint Benedict, who has described the twelve degrees of it, was the supreme master. Gregory surpassed him, however, in his intense fondness for "divine reading" and for contemplation. When he had become Pope, he felt not only the loss of the hidden, meditative life which he had sought, found, and loved in his monastery of the *Clivus Scauri;* he had also the intuition of the diffusion of Christian life which exemplary monasteries could exercise in countries still barbarous or scarcely converted.

Out of monks, that is to say, out of recluses, he made missionaries and bishops. These were Roman monks, and they were all to go far away, carrying with them the spirit of the Pope who had trained

them and sent them out. Saint Benedict had not conceived this kind of monkish life, which was, in the Occident, a creation of Gregory, inspired perhaps by the example of Saint Columbanus.

Saint Gregory was, as we have said, the first Pope-monk, and he was indebted to his first vocation for that humility, the verbal expression of which sometimes exceeds the limit befitting a great pontiff, yet is also associated with a dignity capable of making itself felt, when necessary. We love in Gregory the human element which he preserved. I would give many pages of his formal books for this one phrase which he wrote to the sub-deacon Peter, rector of the Patrimony in Sicily: "You have sent us a bad horse and five good donkeys. I cannot mount the horse, because he is bad, nor the donkeys, because they are donkeys. If you wish to contribute to our maintenance, send us things which are worthy of us" ("*aliquid nobis condignum*").

There are constantly these contrasts in Saint Gregory: we see on the one hand a patience that endures in silence a long time, and, on the other, sudden outbursts and instances of inflexible stubbornness. He would not have been a Roman had he not been stern, but he could also relax his severity and knew on occasion how to listen only to compassion. He was very orderly and required specified accounts which he verified; but, with all that, no one haggled about prices less than he; indeed, he was at times an extravagant alms-giver,

and the day after his death ungrateful Rome accused him of wastefulness!

Three words were dear to him. The first was *rectitudo*, that is, fidelity to law, to rules, to the canons—a fidelity which he required from others and which he was the first of all to practise. We must also understand by *rectitudo* what we put into our old word *loyalty*, and what the Romans put into their word *fides*, with an additional trace of obligation and command. Saint Benedict does not use the word *rectitudo*, but he does use another word dear to Gregory, namely, *discretio*, which Gregory probably derived even more from the monk Cassian than from Saint Benedict. He means by discretion good sense, discernment in the application of the law, in the choice of the right side, and in the determination of the best possible course to pursue. Gregory's *rectitudo* is not without suppleness, for he knows that the entreaties of the apostle gain by being opportune, and that it is sometimes necessary to know how to submit and yield, provided that he who does so never betrays God by a sin. The third word, of which Gregory was fond, was *blandimentum* —the art of pleasing. *Rectitudo* must not make itself hated, and the leader who practises it most efficaciously is the one who makes *rectitudo* loved; and the leader must also make himself loved, without, however, seeking unduly to please.

These three words reveal to us three gifts

possessed by Gregory. I would not venture to say that they always preserved their proper equilibrium in him. We are often surprised at his conduct, for though he is never wanting in *rectitudo*, he is sometimes wanting in *discretio*, in moderation, and at times also in *blandimentum* and sympathy, for he has gusts of passion as well as fits of stubbornness, to which he yields because there are acts of treason which are to him unpardonable.

These contradictions he himself confesses with a frankness which is, perhaps, the most attractive feature of his character.

By *rectitudo* he differentiated himself fundamentally from the Byzantine psychology, and he knew this well and did not refrain from saying so.

Saint Gregory has been ranked among the Latin doctors of the Church. But let us not try to make a speculative dreamer out of a man who said of mysteries that whoever seeks the reason for them does not find it and is drowned in an abyss of doubt. He also wrote that the articles of faith ought to be believed, but not to be too closely investigated (" *ex fide credenda sunt, perscrutanda per rationem non sunt.*" *Moral.*, VI, 19.)

Gregory was a disciplinarian. It was he who wrote to John the Faster : " If you do not observe the canons, and if you have any intention of overturning what the Fathers established, I do not know you."

Like the Popes, his predecessors, Gregory laid down the law ("*Ordinationes apostolicæ Sedis*") to all; and as more of his answers ("*responsa*") have been preserved than those of any other Pope, no Pontiff has furnished the canonists, before and after Gratianus, with more definitive formulas. Better still, Gregory had a very exalted conscience. His most personal work is his *Liber pastoralis*, by which, with a very deliberate purpose, as we have seen, he meant to train the consciences of the bishops, and by which he gave them a revelation of his own conscience. He said once of a bishop: "He must change his soul," and truly the bishops of the Occident found in the *Liber pastoralis* the soul he wished them to have. Mr. Dudden could well write of Gregory: "His maxims moulded the Church."

The injustice of Protestant historians, like Harnack and Schubert, consists in making Gregory responsible for the impoverishment of the general culture (especially the theological culture) of the Occident, which followed the fall of the Roman empire and the installation of the barbarian kingdoms. But Gregory was not more responsible for that than was Isidore of Seville. Boetius, if he had been Pope, would not have acclimatized the philosophy of Aristotle in the Occident, or originated Albert the Great in the sixth century. It was the Orientals who, in the sixth century, elaborated the elements of the thought of the thirteenth. The Occident had Saint

Augustine, and the Occident maintained the authority of that great saint, even when it corrected it, being better inspired and more skilful in that respect than the Orient was with Origen; and it was Saint Gregory who especially contributed to preserve the authority of Saint Augustine, his master.

Our Saint is not forgiven for what is called his credulity. He did not, we are told, continue strictly in the line of thought observed by Saint Leo, and the Church of Rome, it is alleged, defended its faith better against the miraculous (*mirabilia*) before Gregory's time. This is possible, but no one can reproach Gregory for it, unless he reproaches also Saint Athanasius, author of the *Life of Saint Antony*, which was so extensively read in the Occident from the time of Saint Ambrose and the conversion of Augustine.

Gregory believed that the world was near its end. The decrepitude of Rome gave him the measure of the age of the world. Although he cherished no hopes of a prolonged future, he was nevertheless a man of resolute action. A Roman of Rome, he believed in what he called the Republic, and could not imagine that Italy, then so dismembered, could ever be detached from the Republic. Despite the fact that the Italian policy of the *basileus* had been shortsighted and carried out by a detestable administration, Gregory meant to be faithful to the Republic, which, in his opinion, stood for Roman ideals, civilization, law, and

legitimacy. Gregory, therefore, always makes the impression of a loyal subject of the *basileus*, a patriotic Pope, and a great Italian. He was modern enough to be a peace-loving Pope, and even if he did make war, he made it in order to establish peace, whatever sacrifice of self-esteem that peace might cost the emperor. He thought that, since the Lombards could not be driven out of Italy, it was necessary to establish between their kingdom and the Republic a political alliance (*societas*). But this view of Gregory did not prevail, and the Lombards, even when they had become Catholics, still remained hereditary enemies. Pope Stephen II had finally to appeal to king Pepin to make an end of them, and the alliance of the Pope and the Franks was destined to decide the whole history of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, Gregory's policy would have made of the Lombard and Frank kingdoms military frontiers of Byzantine Italy, would have preserved the primacy of the old Roman, non-Germanic empire, and would have spared Europe the rupture with the Greek Orient.

Gregory had another trait of modernism. He had inherited from the Popes of greatest distinction, like Leo or Gelasius, the highest conception of the primacy of the apostolic See that the ancient Church had ever known. He was not disposed to abandon anything of this primacy, and we have seen a proof of this in his energy in prohibiting the patriarch of Constantinople from using the

title of œcumenical. He knew also how to govern the bishops of Rome's suburban provinces with a firmness, which observed the holy canons, but which tolerated no abuse and no failures to accomplish the tasks set, and he intervened without mincing his words to anyone. But, if it were a question of the provinces of Italy which were *not* suburban, or of the provinces of Africa or Illyricum or, still more, of the churches in barbarian kingdoms, in Spain or in Gaul, what respect Gregory professed for the rights of the bishops, and what consideration he showed for the susceptibilities of the Visigoth or Merovingian kings and what condescension to the agents of the *basileus!* In the Orient, what deference also for the sovereign, what care to intervene only if he was in agreement with him! A tacit concordat seemed to regulate these relations of Pope Gregory and the bishops who were not suburban. Under him, the Papacy was, in the divine constitution of the Church, an assistance, a light, a source of wisdom and charity, and one could have recourse to her, sure of finding there efficacious aid. It was indeed what Saint Leo had defined it, *sollicitudo et potestas*. Gregory wished to be, not *dominus omnium* (that title was well enough for the *basileus*), but *servus servorum Dei*. "We observe the rights of both individuals and churches," he loved to say (*Singulis quibusque Ecclesiis sua jura servamus*). What do we ever hear to-day of Occidental ecclesiastical imperialism? Saint Gregory was foreign to this spirit,

and in this great Pope that was an exceptional trait.

Why should we hesitate to say that the solicitude of Gregory, which extended itself to all the churches, deserves the reproach of having counted too much on the *basileus* to restore the unity of the faith in the Orient subject to the imperial sway, and the further reproach of not having embraced in its action the distant churches situated beyond the Oriental frontiers of Rome's influence? In the Occident, however, Germany was to have her hour of conversion, and the Slavs theirs as well, and these conquests were really missionary conquests of Rome. There, at all events, the movement had been started by Gregory, for the mission of Saint Augustine to England was a prelude to that of Saint Boniface in Germany; and the mission to England was the work dearest to Gregory's heart and the one which for many reasons touches us most deeply.

Dear monastery of the *Clivus Scauri*, which brought tears to the eyes of Monseigneur Duchesne, when he contemplated it from the terraces of the Palatine: dear monastery, in the hall of which have been engraved the names of the monks whom he sent to the mission of Kent!

S. Augustinus Anglor. Apostol.
S. Laurentius Cantuar. Archiep.
S. Mellitus Londinen. Ep. Mox Archiep. Cantuar.
S. Justus Ep. Roffensis.

S. Paulinus Ep. Eborac.

S. Petrus Ab. Cantuar.

Honorius Archiep. Cantuar.

These names evoke the memory of the most beautiful of all the pages which portray the life of Saint Gregory, whom England, although separated from Rome, still calls the author of its faith. The *Clivus Scauri* is the part of Rome where one prays with most emotion for those whom Gregory brought into the Roman fold.

[1] J. 1925, December 603.

[2] J. 1910, July 603.

[3] J. 1818, February 601.

[4] P.L., lxxvii, 1061–1066.

[5] J. 1784, July 600. *Scribo*, a functionary charged with recruiting.

[6] J. 1756, August 599.

[7] J. 1810, February 601.

[8] J. 1539, October 598.

[9] J. 1992, January 604.

[10] *Dialog.*, IV, 40. Gregory relates of the Roman deacon Paschasius, that he died in the reign of Symmachus and that "ejus dalmaticam feretro superposita-dæmoniacus tetigit statimque salvatus est."

[11] De Rossi, *Inscriptiones*, II, 228, basing his belief on an itinerary of the eighth century, holds that Gregory died in one of the hospitals near the basilica of Saint Peter, where the author of the said itinerary saw "Gregorii lectum, patris sancti, in quo spiritum reddidit Deo datori dignum munus." In the time of Pope Hadrian, there existed in front of the above-mentioned basilica a "hospitale sancti Gregorii" (*Lib. pont.*, I, 506) but it was distinct from the "oratorium beati Gregorii ubi ejus lectus habetur" (*Ibid.*, II, 196) of the time of Stephen V. The presence of a bed attributed to Saint Gregory could have suggested that he had died there.

[12] *Lib. pontif.*, I, 313. The first words are *Suscipe terra tua.* De Rossi, *Inscriptiones,* II, 52, etc. Certain manuscripts add at the end of these two verses: "Hic vir despiciens mundum et terrena triumphans divitias cælo condidit ore manu." *Ibid.*, 253, and Ewald-Hartmann, II, 470.

[13] Quoted by G. Krüger, *Das Papsttum* (1907), 24.

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